

# Explore

the Shoals

## Our Lady of Courage

Childhood home of Helen Keller  
will forever link this remarkable  
woman to the Tennessee Valley

## Colorful Trail

The Alabama Quilt Barn Trail is worth taking a  
drive off the highway to view these works of art.

**White explores sophisticated  
country music** on "The Hurting Kind"

## Cedric Burnside

sticks to basics of the blues

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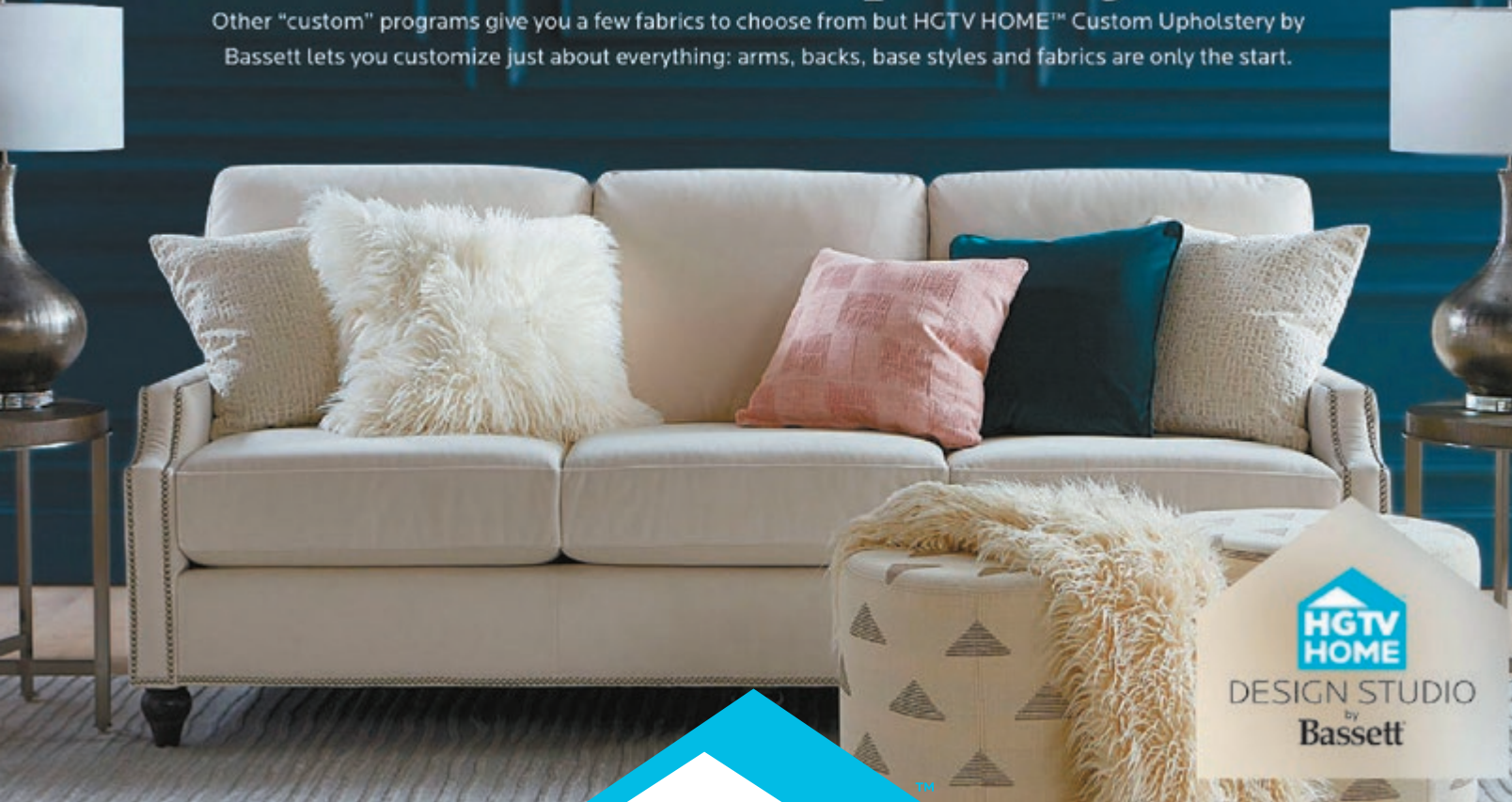
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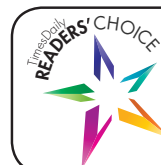
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# Explore

2019-20

the Shoals

## INSIDE this issue

### ABOUT US

[16]

#### THE SHOALS

Distinguishing the four cities:

FLORENCE

MUSCLE SHOALS

SHEFFIELD

TUSCUMBIA

### ATTRACTIONS

[22]

#### OUR LADY OF COURAGE

Childhood home of Helen Keller will forever link this remarkable woman to the Tennessee Valley



[36]

#### COLORFUL TRAIL

The Alabama Quilt Barn Trail

[38]

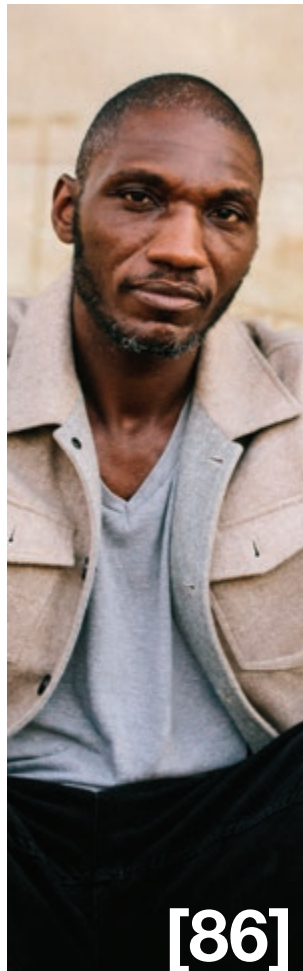
#### FAMILY FRIENDLY MUNICIPAL PARKS

[45]

#### COMMUNITY THEATERS

[46]

#### MOVIE THEATERS



[48]

#### MUSEUMS

[58]

#### UNA LIONS

[60]

#### OCTOBER SHOALSFEST



### FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

[64]

#### CELEBRATE WITH US

### LODGING

[74]

#### GUNRUNNER BOUTIQUE HOTEL





[76]  
MARRIOTT SHOALS  
HOTEL & SPA

[78]  
THE STRICKLIN  
HOTEL

[80]  
OTHER PLACES  
TO STAY  
Colbert & Lauderdale counties

## **MUSIC**

[82]  
WHITE EXPLORES  
SOPHISTICATED  
COUNTRY MUSIC  
on "The Hurting Kind"

[86]  
CEDRIC BURNSIDE  
Sticks to basics of the blues



[90]  
THE ALLMAN  
BETTS BAND  
Record debut album at iconic  
Muscle Shoals Sound Studio

[94]  
MUSEUM HOLDS  
MEMORIES OF  
OWNER'S MUSICAL  
JOURNEY  
Peanutt Montgomery

[98]  
HIP HOP  
is permanent exhibit at  
Alabama Music Hall of Fame



[100]  
MUSCLE SHOALS  
SOUND STUDIO  
LAUNCHES  
PODCAST SERIES

## **OUTDOORS**

[104]  
CAMPGROUNDS

[106]  
AREA GOLF  
COURSES



## **PLACES TO SEE**

[108]  
DAY TRIPS  
Natchez Trace Parkway,  
Jesse Owen Memorial Park,  
U.S. Space and Rocket Center

## **TIME TO EAT**

[110]  
THE RED CLAY TABLE

[114]  
TIME TO EAT  
Shoals area places to dine



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## Welcome to the Shoals!

We're glad you're here and we're delighted to show off our home and "family" to visitors, whether it's your first time or, hopefully, a return trip to our beautiful area.

Music is a large part of what attracts visitors to the Shoals. Our rich music history is legendary and there are several record labels that not only originate from the Shoals, but continue to produce and represent artists whose works have added to the local repertoire. Turn to the Music section of Explore the Shoals and you'll find stories highlighting John Paul White, whose latest album is "The Hurting Kind," or read about Cedric Burnside, whose album "Benton County Relic" earned him a Grammy nomination last year in the "Best Traditional Blues Album" category. And check out how a new generation of musicians stood in Muscle Shoals Sound Studios to record their first album in same place their famous family recorded. We love when musicians honor their music – and their family – in this way.

One pride of place in our Shoals home is Ivy Green, the birthplace of Helen Keller. She truly was a "lady of courage," and we want to introduce you to her during the time she was just a little girl named Helen, living in Tusculum with her family in a dark and silent world until a young teacher named Annie Sullivan literally took Helen by the hand and gave her the gifts of knowledge and communication. We want you to feel a shadow of Helen's joy through her words.

And as always, Explore the Shoals offers a glimpse of the attractions and festivals that make visiting – and living! – in the Shoals so delightful. While you're here, use this magazine as your guide to some of our more popular attractions.

While you're here, take the time to pause and just gaze out over our sparkling gem, the Tennessee River. One of the best things about the Shoals is that there are plenty of places to sit quietly and enjoy this natural marvel that flows through us, connecting us to our past, present and future.

We know that during your visit here, you'll come to love the Shoals as much as we do.



### ON THE COVER

Photograph by Cliff Billingsley

One important gem of the Shoals is the Tennessee River - our link to our past, present and future.

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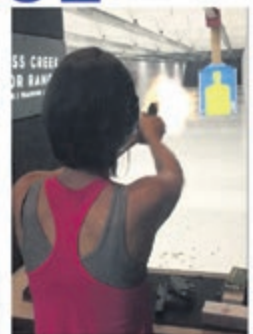
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# *the Shoals*

## distinguishing the four cities

Our name comes from the rocky shoal of the Tennessee River that flows east to west, making a northward turn to join the Ohio River at Paducah, Kentucky. The treacherous shoals are now under water, tamed finally by the Tennessee Valley Authority dams. Meanwhile, our distinct four cities were born.



### **Florence**

Population: 40,059

When founded: 1818; incorporated, 1826

Florence, the county seat of Lauderdale County, was established on the northern banks of the Tennessee River in the years immediately after the Louisiana Purchase and the War of 1812.

The town's site was surveyed in 1818 by Ferdinand Sannoner for Cypress Land Company. Sannoner, who was a native of Italy, named the new town after his favorite city in his homeland.

Florence became a textiles town and was home to some of the earliest mills in the region.

Music is a key element of the city's heritage. W.C. Handy, the "Father of the Blues," and Sam Phillips, the "Father of Rock 'n' Roll," were born in Florence. The Muscle Shoals music industry got its start in Florence, as well. The University of North Alabama has its roots in the first state-chartered university in Alabama.

*florenceal.org*





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## Muscle Shoals

Population: 13,506

When founded: 1923

Muscle Shoals was unincorporated farm land until the early 1920s when automotive tycoon Henry Ford visited the area and proclaimed his vision of turning the flat land into a metropolis. Ford offered to purchase Wilson Dam, but was turned down by the U.S. government. Instead, the government established the Tennessee Valley Authority. In 1923, the people living in unincorporated Muscle Shoals voted 361-6 for incorporation.

Disagreement continues about the origin of the name Muscle Shoals. Some claim the muscle portion of the name is a misspelled reference to mussels found in the Tennessee River, while others say it refers to the hard work and strength used to establish the area.

In the 1960s and 1970s Muscle Shoals became known as a hit maker in the music industry. Rick Hall and his FAME Recording Studios, and talented back-up musicians, The Swampers, put Muscle Shoals on the music map.

*cityofmuscleshoals.com*

## Florence



## Muscle Shoals



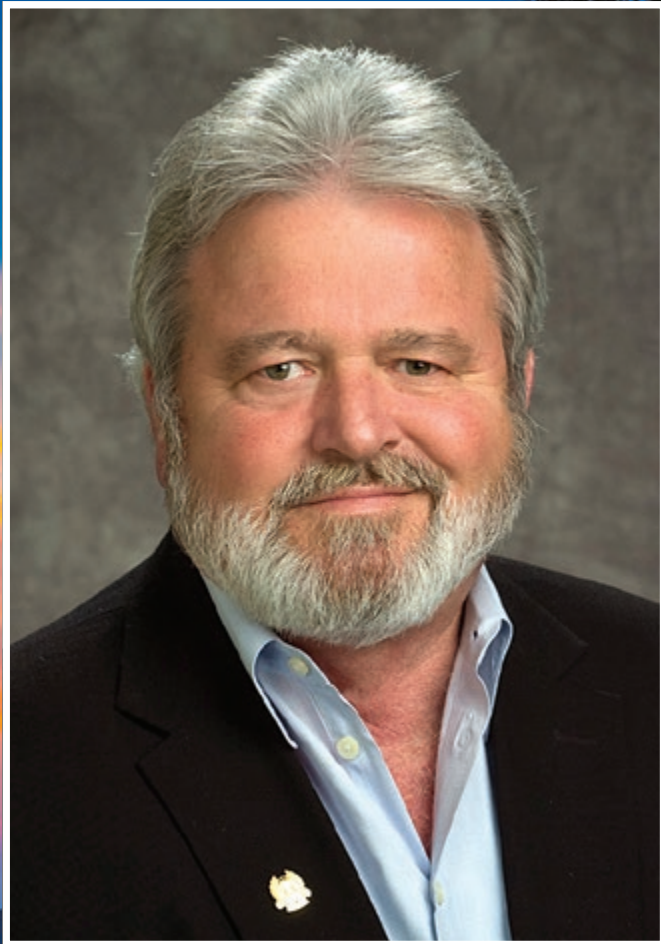
## Sheffield



## Tuscumbia







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## Sheffield

Population: 9,107

Founded: 1884

Gen. Andrew Jackson recommended that a town be established on the bluffs overlooking the Tennessee River after he and his troops camped in the area in 1817. The town was later laid out on that site and called York Bluff. The name was changed to Sheffield, after the city in England, which is on the River Sheaf.

Sheffield is the home of both locations of Muscle Shoals Sound Studios, where artists such as The Rolling Stones, Paul Simon, Boz Scaggs, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Willie Nelson, Rod Stewart and Bob Seger recorded albums in the 1960s and 1970s.

Sheffield is the home to Tuscumbia Landing, which was a debarkation point for Native Americans who were uprooted from their homes and forced to migrate west to reservations in Oklahoma under the Indian Removal Act of 1830 under President Andrew Jackson. In 2013, the city formed the Sheffield Port Authority at Tuscumbia Landing to work with groups that want to develop the site into an interpretive center.

*sheffieldalabama.org*



## Tuscumbia

Population: 8,578

Incorporated: 1820

The French settled the land in the 1700s, but the town was destroyed. The Chickasaw Nation moved in next, establishing a town near the spring. The first white family arrived about 1815.

The town, which is the county seat of Colbert County, was renamed in 1822 in honor of the Chickasaw chief who lived there.

Tuscumbia is best known as for Ivy Green, the birthplace of Helen Keller. It had the first railway west of the Alleghenies.

*cityoftuscumbia.org*







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“Once I knew only darkness and stillness ... my life was without past or future ... but a little word from the fingers of another fall into my hand that clutched at emptiness, and my heart leaped to the rapture of living.”

~Helen Keller



# Our 'Lady of Courage'

Childhood home of Helen Keller will forever link this remarkable woman to the Tennessee Valley







*Born in Tuscumbia, Helen Keller eventually settled in Westport, Connecticut. [courtesy photo]*



R

By today's standard, Ivy Green looks like a simple southern cottage, its white clapboard exterior shaded by a mammoth tree in the front yard and brick pathways inviting you to stroll its tranquil grounds.

Built in 1820, Ivy Green was the homestead of David and Mary Fairfax Moore Keller. David's father, Caspar, was a native of Switzerland who settled

in Maryland. David Keller eventually made his way to Alabama where he acquired large tracts of land for the homestead where he brought his bride, Mary, the daughter of one of Lafayette's aides, granddaughter to an early Colonial governor of Virginia, and second cousin to Robert E. Lee.

It was to this homestead David and Mary's son, Arthur, who was a captain in

the Confederate Army, brought his second bride, Kate Adams. They didn't initially live in the main house, however.

"It was the custom in the South to build a small house near the homestead as an annex to be used on occasion. Such a house my father built after the Civil War, and when he married my mother they went to live in it," wrote Arthur and Kate's daughter, Helen.

"I was born on June



*Ivy Green in Tusculum. [photo by Matt McKean]*



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27, 1880, in Tuscumbia, a little town of northern Alabama," she wrote on the first page of her autobiography, "The Story of My Life."

To say Helen Keller's life was extraordinary would be understating her impact as an advocate who proved to the world that being robbed of hearing and sight should not also rob a person of the ability and opportunity to learn and thrive. The accolades accorded to this remarkable woman were almost constant throughout her life, and did not end with her death on June 1, 1968.

"Miss Keller's life was so long and so crowded with improbable feats . . . that she became a great legend," Alden Whitman wrote in her obituary for The New York Times. "She always seemed to be standing before the world as an example of unquenchable will."

He went on to write about her lifelong work for the American Foundation for the Blind. "She not only collected money, but also sought to alleviate the living and working conditions of the blind. In those years the blind were frequently ill-educated and maintained in asylums; her endeavors were a major factor in changing these conditions."

And it began at Ivy Green.

"Even in the days before my teacher came, I used to feel along the square stiff boxwood hedge, and, guided by the sense of smell, would find the first violets and lilies. There, too, after a fit of temper I went to find comfort and to hide



*Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan communicated by sign language, Sullivan spelled into Helen's hand. [courtesy photo]*



*In her autobiography, Helen Keller, shown here as a child with Anne Sullivan, said it was important that her doll had eyes. [courtesy photo]*

my hot face in the cool leaves and grass," Helen wrote.

Helen was 18 months old when fever took her sight and hearing. Before the illness, she said she was described as an eager child with a "self-asserting disposition." She could mimic the words she heard, something that would have great impact on her life later on.

After her illness, she learned to make what she called crude signs, shaking her head for "no," nodding it for "yes." A pull meant "come" and a push meant "go."

"My mother, moreover, succeeded in making me understand a good deal," Helen wrote. "I always knew when she wished me to bring her something, and I would run upstairs or anywhere else she indicated. Indeed, I owe to her loving wisdom all that was bright and good in my long night."

She noticed, however, that when her mother and others communicated, they didn't use the signs she used, but talked with their mouths.

"Sometimes I stood between two persons who were conversing and touched their lips. I could not understand, and was vexed. I moved my lips and gesticulated frantically without result. This made me so angry at times that I kicked and screamed until I was exhausted."

Her desire to express herself grew, as did her frustration and anger. "I felt as if invisible hands were holding me and I made frantic efforts to free myself. . . . I generally



broke down in tears and physical exhaustion. ... After awhile the need of some means of communication became so urgent that these outbursts occurred daily. Sometimes hourly."

Her desperate parents took Helen to Baltimore for a consultation to see if anything could be done to restore her sight. While the answer was no, it was during this trip they learned Helen could possibly be educated, and they were advised to visit Alexander Graham Bell in Washington who knew about schools and teachers of deaf or blind children. They went immediately to Washington to meet Bell, and Helen later wrote, "... I did not dream that that interview would be the door through which I should pass from darkness into light, from isolation to friendship, companionship, knowledge, love."

It was Bell who advised Arthur Keller to write to the Perkins Institution in Boston and ask if they had a teacher they could send to Helen. It was the summer of 1886 when he received a letter that a teacher had been found.

Anne Mansfield Sullivan arrived at Ivy Green that following March. Helen was 7 years old.

"... there's nothing pale or delicate about Helen," Sullivan wrote in her letters. "She is large, strong and ruddy, and as unrestrained in her movements as a young colt. ... She is here, there, and everywhere. Her hands are in everything, but nothing holds her attention for long. Dear

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*Soon after mastering sign language, Helen Keller quickly learned to read Braille. [courtesy photo]*





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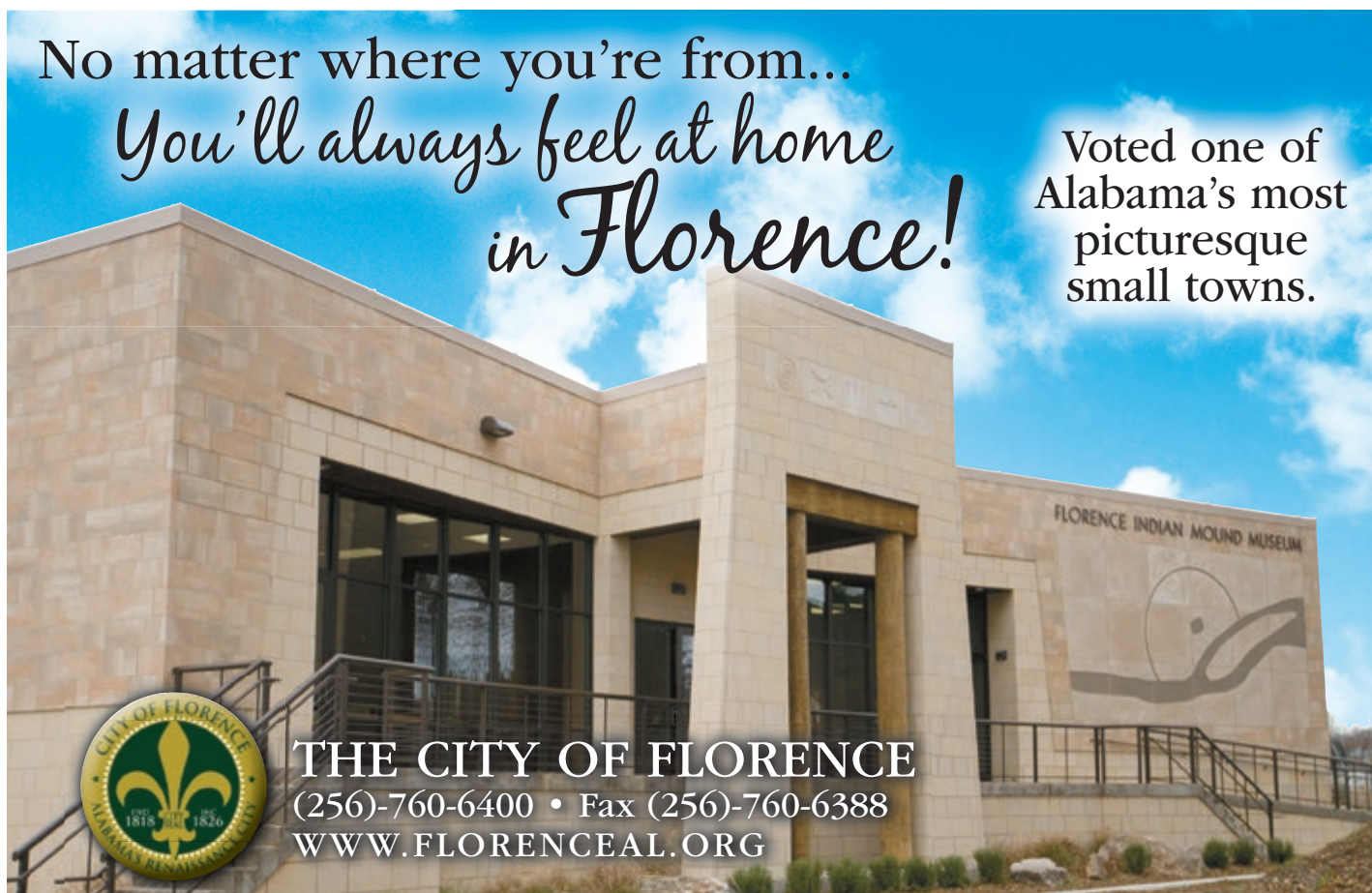
*Photographs of Helen Keller as a young woman, shown here and in the facing page, often reflect the face that Annsullivan said: "...grows more expressive each day...". [courtesy photo]*

child, her restless spirit gropes in the dark. Her untaught, unsatisfied hands destroy whatever they touch because they do not know what else to do with things."

Those hands mimicked the signs her teacher made in Helen's palms, but Anne was discouraged that her young student wasn't grasping the meaning of what she was trying to teach Helen. They weren't just signs to be mimicked, they were words. Anne was attempting to teach Helen that everything she touched had a name, a purpose. Anne was also discouraged because Helen was highly indulged. Her family had allowed the child to have her way in most

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everything. Anne knew she needed to get Helen away from her family to gain Helen's complete trust and to get Helen to obey her.

It was arranged that teacher and student would stay in a little garden house "about a quarter of a mile from her home, only a short distance from Ivy Green, the Keller homestead," Sullivan wrote.

Their first night together was a prime example of the tough road ahead. That night Helen refused to get into bed.

"We had a terrific tussle, I can tell you," Sullivan wrote in her letter. "The struggle lasted for nearly two hours. I never saw such strength and endurance in a child. But fortunately for us both, I am a little stronger, and quite as obstinate when I set out. I finally succeeded in getting her on the bed and covered her up ..."

Their time at the garden house settled into a routine of almost constant teaching, and while Helen continued "learning" words and correctly spelled them back to her teacher, she still had not grasped that what she was doing was identifying everything she touched, that everything had a name. When they were not doing their lessons, Helen often reverted to her crude signs to signify what she wanted.

Then came the breakthrough. Anne Sullivan wrote in her letters that while at the pump-house, Anne made Helen hold her mug under the spout while Anne pumped. When



*Helen Keller's birthplace cottage at Ivy Green. [photo by Matt McKean]*



*The parlor at Ivy Green. Much of the furniture at Ivy Green are original to the Keller family. [file/TimesDaily]*



*The dining room at Ivy Green. [file/TimesDaily]*



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*Helen Keller received an Academy Award for the 1955 documentary about her life titled "Helen Keller in Her Story." [courtesy photo]*



the cold water rushed over Helen's hand, Anne spelled w-a-t-e-r into her free hand.

"The word coming so close upon the sensation of cold water rushing over her hand seemed to startle her. She dropped the mug and stood as one transfixed. A new light came into her face."

That "new light" was knowledge. Helen later wrote: "As the cool stream gushed over one hand she spelled into the other the word water, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten – a thrill of returning thought; and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that 'w-a-t-e-r' meant the wonderful

cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free! There were barriers still, it is true, but barriers that could in time be swept away."

And from Sullivan: "She spelled 'water' several times. Then she dropped on the ground and asked for its name and pointed to the pump and the trellis, and suddenly turning round she asked for my name. I spelled 'Teacher.' ... All the way back to the house she was highly excited, and learned the name of every object she touched.

"I see an improvement in Helen day to day, almost from hour to hour. Everything must have a name now. Where we go, she asks eagerly for the names of things she has not learned at

home. ... She drops the signs and pantomime she used before, as soon as she has words to supply their place, and the acquirement of a new word affords her the liveliest pleasure. And we notice that her face grows more expressive each day."

Now, more than 130 years from that April morning, visitors from around the world come to Ivy Green to touch the pump that Anne and Helen touched and to walk the tranquil grounds they walked, teacher and student, and to marvel at the world-shattering breakthrough that occurred in this little northern Alabama town.




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 Helen Keller Hospital

# Colorful trail

The Alabama Quilt Barn Trail is worth taking a drive off the highway to view these works of art.

*Story and Photography by Russ Corey*

Randy Nash and his sister, Marcia Tully, aren't sure how old their grandmother's quilt is, but a painted block from the quilt is now prominently displayed on the side of an old barn on Lauderdale 165 in Rogersville.

Together, they surmised that Reba Irene Blankenship Holmes made the quilt in the 1930s or 1940s.

"The family used it for inspiration," Tully said.

The quilt square is now part of the nonprofit Alabama Barn Quilt

Trail, which honors the traditional art form of quilting and promotes agri-tourism.

Dale Robinson said there are about 39 quilt blocks affixed to barns, mostly in northwest Alabama where the Alabama trail started. The

trail began in Lauderdale County about almost three years ago by Regina Painter. Painter learned about barn quilt blocks while attending a quilting show in Kentucky, Robinson said.

Nationally, the concept of the barn quilt square



Dephew Nash watches Anthony Hackney attach a painted barn quilt block to his 85-year-old barn in Rogersville.





Marcia Tully is holding a block from the Nash family quilt.

is attributed to Donna Sue Groves of Adams County, Ohio. Her idea has been used by groups and organizations in 48 states, event extending into Canada. The idea is to take a quilt block and paint the design on wood or sheet metal. Robinson said they're now using sheet metal normally used for signs because it is lighter. Families give the quilt trail committee permission to recreate the quilt block pattern and attach it to a family barn, one where the public can drive up and view the quilt block.

"We are promoting agriculture and agri-tourism, getting people out in the countryside to see the farms and honor quilting," Robinson said.

Tully said they agreed to keep the area around the barn clean and allow people to park and visit the site.

"It's the first one in Rogersville," she said. While family and committee members visited, Robinson and Anthony Hackney

attached the two-piece quilt block to the side of the barn.

Committee members gathered recently, broke up into teams and painted several quilt blocks. There are at least two on U.S. 72 between Florence and Rogersville.

"I had seen them for years in Ohio," said Hackney, who has one on his family's barn.

Robinson said most of the barn quilt blocks are located in Colbert, Lauderdale and Franklin counties, but there are some in Limestone and Marion counties. They hope to expand the trail across the state. He said the committee prefers to attach them to older barns, but have relaxed their requirements to allow newer barns, or structures like Coussons Convenience store outside Killen, which is located in the old Outpost 72 building on U.S. 72.

You'll need a map to explore the trail. For quilt block locations, visit [alabamabarnquilttrail.org](http://alabamabarnquilttrail.org)



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# FAMILY-FRIENDLY MUNICIPAL PARKS

The Shoals has numerous parks, three of them on the Tennessee River, with a variety of amenities.

Residents and visitors to the Shoals can find plenty of outdoor activities.

## FLORENCE

**Park information:**  
256-760-6416  
[www.fpard.com/Park](http://www.fpard.com/Park)

### COX CREEK PARK

Where: corner of Alabama 17 (Chisholm Road) and Alabama 133 (Cox Creek Parkway); hours 8 a.m. to dark; free; wear your protective and safety gear

Got your skateboard with you? This is the park for you. Florence Skate Park is located here featuring equipment manufactured by Spohn

Ranch and made out of SkateLite Pro, a surfaced used by professionals and amateurs. The surface stays consistent in hot, cold, wet or dry weather, with frames of galvanized steel welded rather than bolted to prevent movement, and two banked wedges. Other park amenities include 12 lighted tennis courts, a billiard building, a playground, and horseshoe pits.

### DEIBERT PARK

Where: Cox Creek Parkway and Darby Drive; hours: daylight; cost: free

This park offers tranquil nature walks along a 2.85-mile trail that winds through open areas, woods and around three ponds. A playground, picnic shelter and restrooms also are on site.

### MCFARLAND PARK

Where: Alabama 20, west of O'Neal Bridge;

hours: daylight; most services are free

This park gives you the best view and access to the Tennessee River and is a favorite among boaters, anglers, campers, joggers, bicyclists, disc golfers, bird watchers and other outdoor enthusiasts. There is a playground with picnic tables, and picnic tables dot the park with unobstructed views of the majestic river. A lighted walking trail and floating restaurant are irresistible draws,



Deibert Park in Florence.



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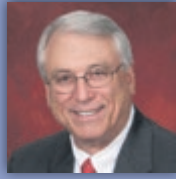
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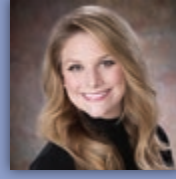
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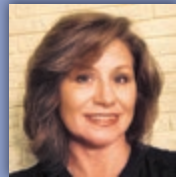
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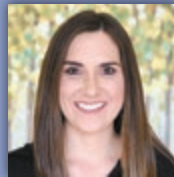
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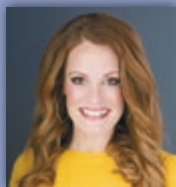
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as are the swings and benches that overlook the river. Other amenities include boat ramps and slips, a baseball field, and camping area. The Florence-Lauderdale Visitors Center is located here.

#### RIVER HERITAGE PARK

Where: 800 Cox Creek Parkway; 256-760-6416

This park, located near the Marriott Shoals Hotel and Spa, features a playground and large splash pad that's open May to September from 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. A large pavilion offers a cool place to sit when it's not rented for special events.



Gattman Park in Muscle Shoals.



Walking Trail at TVA in Muscle Shoals.



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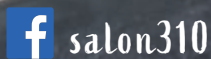
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River Heritage Park in Florence.

### WILDWOOD PARK

Where: Waterloo Road, west of Florence; hours: daylight; free

It's all nature here, with picnic tables, a nature trail, a pavilion, and beginner and advanced mountain bike trails.

### MUSCLE SHOALS

**Park information:**  
256-386-9270  
[www.cityofmuscleshoals.com/Default.asp?ID=26&pg=Facilities](http://www.cityofmuscleshoals.com/Default.asp?ID=26&pg=Facilities)

### GATTMAN PARK

Where: 901 Gattman Park Drive; see website for hours

The park has two gymnasiums, one with an indoor walking track; pavilions (two large, one small), and numerous picnic tables. Also

featured is a playground, outdoor walking track, and a splash pad that opens Memorial Day weekend.

### SHEFFIELD

**Park information:**  
256-386-5616  
[www.sheffieldalabama.org/attractions](http://www.sheffieldalabama.org/attractions)

### RIVERFRONT PARK

Where: 1416 Alabama Ave., Sheffield; Open daily 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Riverfront Park overlooks beautiful Pickwick Lake and features a boundless playground and splash pad for children. It is a lovely spot for fishing, picnics and has a walking trail with a stunning view of the water.

### TUSCUMBIA

**Park information:**  
256-386-5655  
[www.facebook.com/Tuscumbia-Parks-Recreation-491863214257810/](https://www.facebook.com/Tuscumbia-Parks-Recreation-491863214257810/)

### SPRING PARK

Where: South of downtown; hours: varies; some costs for park attractions

Spring Park serves as a centerpiece for the town of Tuscumbia and dates back to the 1800s. It features a man-made stone waterfall, called Coldwater Falls. The park also features a mini-amusement park for children and a splash pad. The rides, including a kid-sized roller coaster, a carousel and a train that takes passengers throughout the park,

operates daily. Spring Park also offers a splash pad. More information, including operational dates, is available online at [Tuscumbiarailway.com](http://Tuscumbiarailway.com).

### TVA

#### TVA ROCKPILE RECREATIONAL AREA

The TVA Rockpile Recreational Area is home to the "coolest" playground in America, according to Play Across America. The website and iPhone app named the TVA playground the coolest in America for the month of April in 2016. Play Across America is a crowd-sourced directory of playgrounds in the country. The Rockpile Playground





Cox Creek Park in Florence.



McFarland Park in Florence.



Spring Park in Tusculumbia.

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was applauded for its river theme, taking its inspiration from the Tennessee River it is situated next to and Wilson Dam just a short walk away. Children can slide down blue slides that mimic water flowing out of the Wilson Dam spillways; climb on a turtle and fish that pop out of the ground; climb and slide through a tree house; or swing on swings attached to poles fashioned to look like tree trunks. An interactive soundboard that plays animal sounds is popular with children. The board is decorated with animal tracks and pictures. The playground is just one attraction in

the recreation area. There is a paved pedestrian path that follows the river to the rockpile waterfall for a closer view of Wilson Dam. The recreation area also has campsites, hiking trails and a boat launch. The 17 miles of paved and primitive hiking trails are Americans with Disabilities Act compliant.



Riverfront Park in Sheffield.



Wildwood in Florence.



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## **Historic Roxy Theatre**

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256-332-1760

[historicroxytheatre.com](http://historicroxytheatre.com)

## **Ritz Theatre**

111 W. Third St., Sheffield

256-381-8370

[facebook.com/pages/  
Ritz-Theater](https://facebook.com/pages/Ritz-Theater)

## **Zodiac Theater**

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Shoals Community Theatre, Florence.



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The Roxy, Russellville.

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King Drive-In, Russellville.



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# museums

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9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday; 1-3 p.m. Sunday

This regional art center has a permanent exhibit of the Martin Petroglyph, a 3,000 pound boulder depicting human footprints and snakes, carved by the prehistoric people of northwest Alabama. Also among the museum's displays is the rare and historic Chickasaw beaded and embroidered bandolier strap that belonged to Chief George Colbert, for whom the county is named.



Tennessee Valley Museum of Art, Tuscumbia.



## BELLE MONT MANSION

1569 Cook Lane, Tuscumbia  
256-381-5052  
[ahc.alabama.gov/properties/bellemont/bellemont.aspx](http://ahc.alabama.gov/properties/bellemont/bellemont.aspx)  
Hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; admission charged

Belle Mont Mansion is one of Alabama's best examples of the styles of the Jeffersonian-Palladian style architecture. The two-story structure was built in the early 1800s by Dr. Alexander Williams Mitchell, a native of Virginia, and one of the area's largest slaveholders. The house was sold in 1833 to Isaac Winston, who was the uncle of Alabama first's native born governor, John Anthony Winston. Winston was also the cousin of Patrick Henry and Dolly Madison. The structure was sold again in 1941 and donated to the Alabama Historical Commission.



Belle Mont Mansion in Tuscumbia.

## TUSCUMBIA DEPOT AND ROUNDHOUSE

204 W. Fifth St., Tuscumbia  
256-389-1357  
[tuscumbiarailway.com](http://tuscumbiarailway.com)  
Hours: call

It's only fitting that since Tuscumbia was the site of the first railroad west of the Allegheny Mountains – built in the 1830s – it would have the area's premiere railway museum. The museum is in the former Tuscumbia Depot, which was built in 1888 and served as division headquarters for the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. The fully restored depot features rail and train memorabilia including a photo gallery. There is an interactive train simulator and telegraph demonstrations. Keeping with the historic architecture of the depot, a roundhouse was built in 2013.



Tuscumbia Depot and Roundhouse, Tuscumbia.



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# Pope's Tavern

Pope's Tavern Museum's façade harkens to the time in the 1800s when it was a stagecoach stop, tavern and inn. It is one of the oldest buildings in Florence and its location pinpoints the military road that once ran through the area, connecting Nashville to the Natchez Trace, and on to New Orleans. Andrew Jackson is said to have stayed at the tavern during his march to the Battle of New Orleans. The inn was a hospital for both the Confederate and Union during the Civil War before later becoming a private family home until the city bought it in 1965. It is housed with antiques and artifacts from the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as artifacts from the Civil War and local history.

## WHERE:

**Location:**

203 Hermitage Drive, Florence

**Hours:**

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday

**Admission:**

admission charged

Call: 256-760-6439



Pope's Tavern, Florence.



## EDITH NEWMAN CULVER MUSEUM

501 Main St., Waterloo  
256-767-6081  
Hours: call

The museum is nestled on a hillside overlooking downtown Waterloo and the path that thousands of Indians took during the 1800s removal as a part of the Trail of Tears. The two-story structure is the town's museum and features many military memorabilia, as well as Civil War relics and Native American artifacts. On the grounds is a barn housing a collection of horse-drawn carriages. The museum was the home of Joseph Marion Newman and his wife, Sarah. Newman, a Union soldier from Ohio, purchased the house in 1918 after opening a sawmill north of Waterloo.



Edith Newman Culver Museum, Waterloo.

## ALABAMA MUSIC HALL OF FAME

617 U.S. 72 W., Tuscumbia  
256-381-4417  
Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday  
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alamhof.org

This is the place to learn the rich history, ever-changing present, and bright future of the Shoals music scene. The renowned achievements of music artists who live, have passed through and continue to record in the Shoals are found here. Exhibits include a 12-foot jukebox, a wax figure of Nat King Cole, recording equipment used in Sam Phillips' Memphis Music Service, apparel and instruments from many artists.



Alabama Music Hall of Fame, Tuscumbia.



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# Frank Lloyd Wright

## Rosenbaum House and Museum

Frank Lloyd Wright is among the most prominent and revered American architects of the 20th century. He designed approximately 1,000 structures spanning a 70-year career. He preferred construction where buildings blended into the landscape rather than

being obviously perched to rise independently of the ground on which it was constructed. His famous architectural designs include the Prairie, Concrete Block and Usonian, of which the Rosenbaum House in Florence is included. Horizontal lines connect

the home with the land, as do its flat roofs with overhangs, natural materials like cypress, glass and brick, access to the outside from every room, and board and batten walls. The house has its original Wright-designed furniture.

### WHERE:

**Location:**

601 Riverview Drive, Florence

**Hours:**

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday; 1-4 p.m. Sunday.  
For large group tours, call 256-718-5050

**Admission:**

admission charged

[wrightinalabama.com](http://wrightinalabama.com)

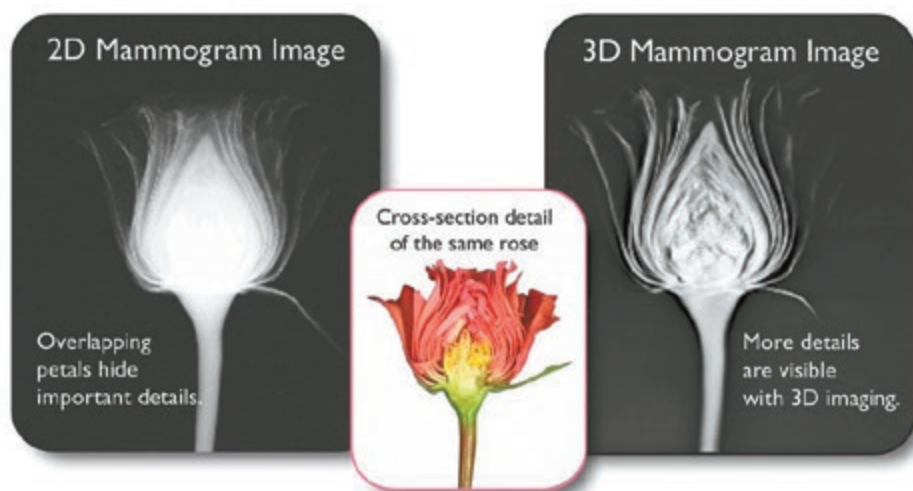


The Rosenbaum House.





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ATTRACTIONS



Ivy Green, Tuscumbia

The site of the birthplace of Helen Keller features the home and grounds, including the famous pump where teacher Annie Sullivan showed a young Keller how to spell w-a-t-e-r in sign language. That single lesson opened the outside world to the child.

## WHERE:

**Location:**

300 N. Commons St. W, Tuscumbia

**Hours:**

8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Saturday

**Admission:**

admission charged

Call: 256-383-4066

[helenkellerbirthplace.org](http://helenkellerbirthplace.org)



# W.C. Handy Museum and Library



W.C. Handy Birthplace, Museum and Library, Florence.

W.C. Handy became famous in the music world for his compositions such as “Memphis Blues” and “St. Louis Blues” and as a band conductor and author. He is heralded as the “Father of the Blues.” But before his famous life, he was born in a small log cabin in Florence on Nov. 16, 1873. The museum in his honor houses a collection of memorabilia, including his famous trumpet and his personal piano, as well as personal papers and original sheet music.

## WHERE:

**Location:**

620 W. College St., Florence

**Hours:**

10 .am. to 4 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday

**Admission:**

admission charged

Call: 256-760-6434



# Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts

ATTRACTIONS



Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts, Florence.

Known as the cultural center for Florence, the center has an arts gallery and museum that serves as an educational center and cultural hub for the area. There are annual exhibits and rotating exhibits from artists of Southeast. Workshops and classes for all ages also take place here. The annual Arts Alive juried fine arts and crafts festival is sponsored by the center's volunteers in May at the center and in Wilson Park across from the center.

## WHERE:

**Location:**

217 E. Tuscaloosa St., Florence

**Hours:**

9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday

**Admission:**

Free

256-760-6379



# Children's Museum of the Shoals



Children's Museum of the Shoals, Florence.

The Children's Museum of the Shoals is the area's go-to place for child development and fun through educational games and activities. It features hands-on exhibits that encourage children to play while learning about the area's culture, history, and about the Tennessee River. Deibert Park, which is adjacent to the museum, hosts a nature walking trail and a playground.

## WHERE:

### Location:

2810 Darby Drive, Florence  
(Near the entrance to Deibert Park)

256-765-0500

<https://www.facebook.com/cmsal/>



UNA's pride:

# Leo and Una

ATTRACTIONS

Leo III and Una are the brother and sister pair of African lions who have lived at the University of North Alabama since 2003, when they came to Florence as cubs.

Their campus home – the George H. Carroll Lion Habitat – anchors Harrison Plaza, which is the main entrance to the university. The \$1.3 million habitat was built according to guidelines established by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The outdoor area features boulders, streams, a waterfall and a pond. Leo II and Una are free to move between the outside and inside as they wish on good weather days, and are kept inside during inclement weather days.

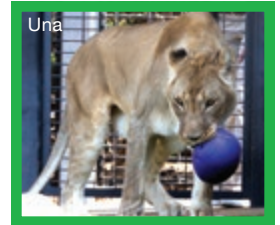
The habitat has received a perfect inspection score each year since it opened. The hour-long, unannounced inspection by a representative with the U.S. Department of Agriculture takes a deep look at the interior, enclosure, outside playground, the lions' food, snacks and bones, veterinary records, transport trailer and supplies used to care for the lions and for the habitat.

The habitat is an easy stop for visitors and locals to catch a glimpse of the big cats. There are two observatories that offer views of the habitat and places to catch Leo III and Una napping and playing. And peek in on the lions through their web cam at [www.una.edu/lioncam](http://www.una.edu/lioncam)



# about us

Here are some fun facts about Leo III and his sister, Una, the two live lion mascots at the University of North Alabama.



- UNA has had a live lion mascot on campus since 1974 when Leo I came to campus. Leo II came to UNA in the early 1990s.
- Leo III and Una were born in November 2002 and are the first lion pair to live at UNA.
- The lions are the guests of honor each April at a birthday party thrown in their honor. The birthday party is in April in recognition of Leo I's spring birthday.
- Leo III and Una are given a special toy each year at the birthday party. In the past, those have been high-density plastic balls, tubes and column-shaped toys.
- Una's name comes from the university's initials, but also represents a university supporters, Leo and Una Watson, from Michigan, who fell in love with the university and adopted Leo II as a philanthropy project and supported the lions for a number of years.
- As of October 2017, Leo II weighed 476 pounds and Una weighed 320 pounds.
- In 2016 Leo III and Una were ranked No. 6 among the Top 25

live animal mascots in college football by Fox Sports. In 2012, Leo III and Una were named the top live sports mascot in the country by totalprosports.com.

- Leo and Una eat about 15 pounds of meat each day. The amount varies some depending on the season and the lions' physical activity. They also receive a USDA-approved bone twice a week to keep their teeth clean and jaws strong.
- It costs \$10,000 to \$15,000 each year to care for the lions, and the funds are raised solely through private donations. UNA fans pass lion-shaped collection banks during home football games to collect money to care for Leo III and Una. Other donations can be dropped off at the collection box beside the lions' habitat or made through the university advancement office.
- The life expectancy of lions in the wild is 10-12 years. But, in captivity, Leo III and Una are expected to live 15-20 years.
- The lions are typically in their outdoor habitat each day from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. in winter months and 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. in the spring and summer. The door to the indoor habitat is always open to give the lions a place to stay inside if wanted. Watch them on their Lion Cam at [www.una.edu/lioncam](http://www.una.edu/lioncam)

## Welcome to the Shoals!

The Colbert County Commission's mission is to promote economic development, support existing industries, and encourage tourism. You'll find Colbert County is a wonderful place to live, locate a business, raise a family, or just come for a visit.

### Colbert County Commission

Tommy Barnes - District 1

David Black - District 2

Jimmy Gardiner - District 3

Tori Bailey - District 4

Darol Bendall - District 5

Charles Hovater - District 6



## Colbert County Commission

201 N. Main Street, Tuscumbia, AL 35674 • 256-386-8501 • [www.colbertcounty.org](http://www.colbertcounty.org)



# OCTOBER SHOALS FEST



Mavis Staples

Jason Isbell

to feature  
Jason Isbell,  
Mavis Staples



**Jason Isbell and The 400 Unit will headline the inaugural ShoalsFest on Oct. 5 that includes soul artist Mavis Staples, Sheryl Crow and Amanda Shires.**

The one-day festival will be at McFarland Park in Florence. See ShoalsFest.net for ticket information and a schedule of artists. Ticket sales will be limited to 5,000.

The Staples Singers recorded their classic tracks "I'll Take You There" and "Respect Yourself" at Muscle Shoals Sound Studios in Sheffield in 1972

with members of The Swampers.

Isbell, a four-time Grammy Award-winner from Greenhill in Lauderdale County, honed his guitar playing skills and his deep reverence for music history as a teenager working at FAME Recording Studios, and playing with local musicians and members of the revered

studio house band The Swampers.

Isbell teamed up with his manager, Traci Thomas, and Outback Presents to bring this special event back to the place that has given him, and the world, so much, according to a festival news release.

"I've always wanted to bring a music festival to the Shoals and McFarland Park is the

perfect place to enjoy world-class artists and the beauty of the Singing River," Isbell wrote in the release. "These acts are all personal favorites of ours, and we're proud to bring them to our hometown and show them a good time. I hope y'all are as excited as we are about ShoalsFest 2019."

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MEET OUR  
COVER PHOTOGRAPHER  
CLIFF BILLINGSLEY





The beautiful photo that graces the cover of Explore the Shoals and the stunning image on this page were taken by Cliff Billingsley.

Billingsley was born and reared in the Shoals area and is a graduate of Brooks High School and the University of North Alabama.

"I have always been interested in technology and fell in love with digital photography about six years ago," he said. "With the innovation of UAV's (drones) I really enjoyed capturing the

amazing landscapes of the Shoals from new perspectives.

"I am very honored to be able to share my passion with others and to show off the Shoals!"

If you haven't seen Billingsley behind his camera or operating his drone, you've probably seen him throughout Florence in another capacity.

Billingsley has worked for the Florence Police Department for more than 20 years.





# celebrate with us

Area celebrations include a variety of festivals from spring until winter. In pride of place are the W.C. Handy Music Festival and the Helen Keller Festival, both during the summer months.

The rest of the year includes Shoals Earth Day, Arts Alive, Spirit of Freedom Celebration on the Fourth of July and even one to remember special four-legged furry friends. The Coon

Dog Cemetery has a celebration every year on Labor Day weekend.

As the leaves put on their show of colors in autumn, Oka Kapassa-Return to Cold Water brings many members of Native American tribes back to Tusculumbia to commemorate the kindness shown to their ancestors during the terrible forced removal of American Indians in the 1830s. That time

is remembered again during the Trail of Tears motorcycle ride.

And a yearly celebration will take you back to times of yore. The Alabama Renaissance Faire is recognized statewide and beyond as one of the best of its kind.

So whatever the season, and whatever your taste, there's something going on in the Shoals.

## ARTS ALIVE

Florence's Wilson Park plays hosts to a myriad of artists and craftsmen who flock to the downtown park to sell their arts and crafts and compete in the juried Arts Alive exhibit at the Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts.

Anything from paintings to sculptures to clothing and woodwork can be found at Arts Alive.

The 2019 festival is May 18-19. For details about the festival or exhibits, visit [artsalivealabama.com](http://artsalivealabama.com) or call 256-760-6379.





# ALABAMA RENAISSANCE FAIRE

The Fountain on the Green, better known the rest of the year as Wilson Park in Florence, hosts nobility, knights and kings as the city of Florence celebrates the annual Renaissance Faire on Oct. 27-28.

The 2019 faire is Oct. 26-27. For details about the fun and educational event, visit [alarenfaire.org](http://alarenfaire.org).

FESTIVALS

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The life and accomplishments of one of the Shoals' most famous natives, Helen Keller, is celebrated each year with a summer festival.

The weeklong festival takes place in Spring Park in Tusculumbia, not far from Keller's birthplace, Ivy Green.

The festival includes live bands and music, a 5-mile and 23-mile family bike ride, a 5-mile and 1-mile fun run, a car and truck show, a golf tournament, arts and crafts, educational displays, and a parade and street party.

Of course, no Keller festival is complete without a rendition of "The Miracle Worker," and the Helen Keller Art Show of Alabama.

The 2019 festival is June 27-30. For details, visit [helenkellerfestival.com](http://helenkellerfestival.com) or call 256-383-4066.

## HELEN KELLER FESTIVAL



## SHOALS SPIRIT OF FREEDOM CELEBRATION



The Shoals celebrates Independence Day with food, music and, of course, fireworks. It starts at 10:30 a.m. and continues through 11 p.m. July 4 on the banks of the Tennessee River at McFarland Park, Florence. For details, call 256-740-4141.



## W.C. HANDY MUSIC FESTIVAL

Every year Florence honors W.C. Handy, the Father of the Blues, with a 10-day music extravaganza.

Bands come from all over to perform in every nook and cranny they can find in the Shoals. It all comes to a climax with the W.C. Handy headliner, which always promises to be one of the biggest acts of the year.

The 2019 festival is July 19-28. For details, visit [wchandymusicfestival.org](http://wchandymusicfestival.org) or call 256-740-4141.



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## OKA KAPASSA — RETURN TO COLD WATER

Remembering the kindness shown to them by the citizens of Tuscumbia, Native Americans return to Spring Park every year to celebrate their culture and heritage with the people of Tuscumbia.

Oka Kapassa features storytelling, stone carving, traditional music and dancing, Native American crafts, baskets, food and educational events teaching language, pottery and archery.

The 2019 festival is Sept. 13-14. For details, visit [okakapassa.org](http://okakapassa.org) or call 256-757-4438.



## COON DOG CEMETERY LABOR DAY CELEBRATION

Not many places have a cemetery for coon dogs. Even fewer have a Labor Day celebration at a coon dog cemetery.

But the annual Coondog Cemetery Labor Day Celebration has become one of the most popular, if quirky, events in the Shoals.

Graves will be decorated and live music and barbecue will be available.

The Coondog Cemetery is at 4945 Coondog Cemetery Road, off U.S. 72 and Alabama 247.

For more details, visit [coondogcemetery.com](http://coondogcemetery.com) or call 256-383-0783.







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# TRAIL OF TEARS COMMEMORATIVE MOTORCYCLE RIDE

Motorcyclists honor the Trail of Tears by riding from Chattanooga to Waterloo. The riders always ride on the third Saturday in September, this year Sept. 21.



## Other Celebrations & Festivals

### MONTHLY CELEBRATION

#### FIRST FRIDAYS

The First Friday of every month March through December from 5-8 p.m., downtown Florence sidewalks are lined with vendors, artists and musicians. Court Street is closed off and the area becomes filled with people who love strolling, and shopping among the vendors and in downtown shops before or after having dinner in some of Florence's best-loved restaurants.

### YEARLY FESTIVALS

#### RECALL LAGRANGE

Civil War re-enactments exhibits and entertainment. May 4-5. LaGrange College Site, 1491 LaGrange College Road, Leighton. Visit [lagrangehistoricsite.com](http://lagrangehistoricsite.com).

#### NORTH ALABAMA AFRICAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Explores African art, fashions, culture, crafts, music and food; 2019 festival June 1 at the Willie Green Recreation Park, 609 S. East St., Tuscumbia. 256-383-0783

#### FRONTIER DAY CELEBRATION

Re-enactors showcase how early Shoals residents lived at Pope's Tavern, Florence; June 1-2. For details, call 256-740-4141.

#### FRANKLIN COUNTY WATERMELON FESTIVAL

It's not summer in the south without watermelon. The people of Russellville celebrate this Southern, summer fruit with music and more Aug. 16-17. For details, call 256-332-1760.



## NORTH ALABAMA STATE FAIR

The state fair is an American tradition, and that's no different in the Shoals. Rides, booths, exhibits and entertainment abound at the fairgrounds in Muscle Shoals; Sept. 17-22. Visit [northalabamastatefair.com](http://northalabamastatefair.com) or call 256-383-3247.

## OKTOBERFEST

St. Florian's German heritage is celebrated in the fall, as the downtown area is host to live music, arts and crafts, antique tractor shows and German food. For details, call 256-767-3960.

## ROGERSVILLE HERITAGE DAYS

Rogersville celebrates fall with antique cars, trucks and tractors, an art show, chili cook-off, children and pets parade and vendors; Oct. 12-13, downtown Rogersville. For details, visit [rogersvillealabama.com](http://rogersvillealabama.com) or call 256-247-9449.

## PLANTATION CHRISTMAS

It's an Old South Christmas at Tuscumbia's Belle Mont Mansion, with traditional ornaments, period holiday music, ballroom dancing; Dec. 1. Built in 1828, the plantation is at 1569 Cook Lane, off U.S., 43 S, Tuscumbia. Visit [colbertcountytourism.org](http://colbertcountytourism.org) or call 256-383-0783 for details.

## DICKENS CHRISTMAS Y'ALL

Dickens Christmas Y'all, is a holiday festival reminiscent of the classic "A Christmas Carol"; Carriage rides, snow falling, music, arts and crafts and food vendors. STS Top 20 Event. Dec. 13-14. For more information, call 256-383-9797.



Franklin County Watermelon Festival in Russellville.

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Dickens Christmas Y'all in Tuscumbia.



North Alabama African Heritage Festival in Tuscumbia.



First Fridays in Florence.



North Alabama State Fair in Muscle Shoals.



Frontier Day Celebration in Florence.



LaGrange College Site in Leighton.





Plantation Christmas in Tuscumbia.

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## GUNRUNNER

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The GunRunner is more than a boutique hotel, it's an experience, with 10 suites, seven with private balconies, specially designed to celebrate local music, fashion and art icons, and honor the area's history. One suite is decorated by renowned fashion designer Billy Reid, another is themed around the legendary Muscle Shoals Sound Studios. Brick walls and exposed ceiling beams give the commons area an industrial chick vibe, and a former freight elevator has been converted into a stunning bar. Suites may be reserved separately, or choose to have the "run of the house," which includes private access to all 10 suites and the common area.

### GunRunner Boutique Hotel

310 E. Tennessee St., Florence  
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[gunrunnerhotel.com](http://gunrunnerhotel.com)  
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**Stricklin Hotel**

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The musical The New York Times declares, "BRILLIANT! Broadway's best creative minds reimagine and bring to life the beloved Nickelodeon series with humor, heart and pure theatricality in 'a party for the eyes and ears' (Daily Beast).

Explore the depths of theatrical innovation in THE SPONGEBOB MUSICAL, 2018 Best Musical winner of the Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards, where the power of optimism really can save the world.

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FEBRUARY 21-23, 2020

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Broadway & London's award-winning smash comedy! Called "A GUT-EUSTING HIT" (The New York Times) and "THE FUNNIEST PLAY BROADWAY HAS EVER SEEN" (HuffPost), this classic murder mystery is chock-full of misdeeds and malice as madcap mania delivers "A RIGOROUS EXPLOSION OF COMEDY" (Daily Beast) that is "TONS OF FUN FOR ALL AGES" (HuffPost).

Performances Friday 8pm, Saturday 2 & 8pm, Sunday 1 & 8:30pm



## CHOIR MAN

APRIL 4, 2020

The runaway hit of numerous international music festivals is hitting the road for its first U.S. tour! Known across the globe as "the ultimate feel good show," THE CHOIR OF MAN offers up 90 minutes of indisputable joy! It's a party. It's a concert. It's a portmanteau of good times set in a working pub (free beer anyone?). That combines hair-raising harmonies, high-energy dance, and live percussion with look-stopping choreography.

The multi-talented cast of nine handsome bachelors sings everything – pub tunes, folk, Broadway, classic rock – all to rock-raising heights. It's the best singing, dancing, stomping, pub crawl of a concert you'll ever attend!

CHEERS

Performance ONLY - Saturday 8pm



## A BRONX TALE

BROADWAY'S NEW HIT MUSICAL

NOVEMBER 15-17, 2019

"Jersey Boys meets West Side Story" - anti-new-york Three years ago, Academy Award nominee Chazz Palminteri teamed up with Academy Award winner Robert De Niro, Tony® Award winner Jerry Zaks and Sergio Trujillo to create this streetwise musical - based on Palminteri's true life story.

A BRONX TALE, Broadway's hit crowd-pleaser, takes you to the stoops of the Bronx in the 1950s, where a young man is caught between the father he loves and the mob boss he'd love to be.

Bursting with high-energy dance numbers and original doo-wop tunes from Academy Award® and Tony® Award-winner Alan Menken and Glenn Slater, A BRONX TALE is an unforgettable story of loyalty and family.

Performances Friday 8pm, Saturday 2 & 8pm, Sunday 1 & 8:30pm



## Escape Margaritaville

MARCH 20-22, 2020

Welcome to Margaritaville!

Where people come to get away from it all...and stay to find something they never expected. With a book by Emmy Award® winner Greg Garcia ("My Name is Earl," "Raising Hope") and Emmy Award® nominee Mike O'Malley ("Survivors Remorse," "Shameless")

ESCAPE TO MARGARITAVILLE is the musical comedy featuring both original songs and your rock-savvy Jimmy Buffet classics, including "Tina," "Volcano," "Chesapeake in Paradise" and many more. USA Today calls it "A life slice of paradise" and Entertainment Weekly raves, "It will hook your flip-flops off!" So don't let the party start without you.

Performances Friday 8pm, Saturday 2 & 8pm, Sunday 1 & 8:30pm



## BANDSTAND

THE FIRST MUSICAL TO BE PERFORMED BY A WOMAN

JANUARY 3-5, 2020

From three-time Tony® winner and Hamilton choreographer,

Andy Blankenbuehler, comes an inspiring new American musical that episodes with infectious music and high-octane, heart-stopping dancing.

It's 1945, and six soldiers return from war to a changed nation. When NBC announces a national competition to find the nation's next great musical superstars, they form a band unlike any the nation has ever seen. Along the way, they discover the power of music to face the impossible, find their voice, and finally feel like they have a place to call home.

"The show defies you not to be moved" (Time Out New York).

Performances Friday 8pm, Saturday 2 & 8pm, Sunday 1 & 8:30pm



## THE COLOR PURPLE

2016 TONY WINNER BEST MUSICAL REVIVAL

MAY 8-10, 2020

THE COLOR PURPLE is the 2016 Tony Award® winner for Best Musical Revival! Hailed as "a direct hit to the heart" (The Hollywood Reporter), this joyous American classic has conquered Broadway in an all-new "reinvigoratingly reconceived production that is a glory to behold" (The New York Times). With a soul-raising, Grammy-winning score of jazz, gospel, ragtime and blues, THE COLOR PURPLE gives an exhilarating new spirit to this Pulitzer Prize-winning story.

Don't miss this stunning re-imagining of an epic story about a young woman's journey to love and triumph in the American South. Experience the exhilarating power of this Tony-winning triumph that New York Magazine calls "one of the greatest revivals ever."

Performances Friday 8pm, Saturday 2 & 8pm, Sunday 1 & 8:30pm



## WAITRESS

MUSIC BY JAMES NEAVE

JANUARY 17-19, 2020

Inspired by the beloved film, WAITRESS tells the story of Jenna, an expert pie maker who dreams of a way out of her small town. A baking contest and the town's new doctor may offer her a fresh start, but Jenna must summon the strength to rebuild her own life. Don't miss this uplifting celebration of friendship, motherhood, and the magic of a well-made pie.

"WAITRESS is a little slice of heaven!" says Entertainment Weekly, and is "sweet, sassy and passionate," according to New York Magazine. Don't miss this uplifting and hilarious musical!

Performances Friday 8pm, Saturday 2 & 8pm, Sunday 1 & 8:30pm

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## CHOIR MAN

APRIL 4, 2020

The runaway hit of numerous international music festivals is hitting the road for its first U.S. tour! Known across the globe as "the ultimate feel good show," THE CHOIR OF MAN offers up 90 minutes of indisputable joy! It's a party. It's a concert. It's a portmanteau of good times set in a working pub (free beer anyone?). That combines hair-raising harmonies, high-energy dance, and live percussion with look-stopping choreography.

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## White explores sophisticated country music on "The Hurting Kind"



**John Paul White wasn't on a quest to reinvent himself when he began writing tracks for his latest album, "The Hurting Kind," but he did want to explore a style of music he'd grown fond of.**

"The Hurting Kind," he said, is similar in a lot of ways to his 2016 release, "Beulah," and in a lot of ways it's not.

"I didn't think about it that much," White said of "Beulah." "It just forced its way out of me. I didn't actively decide how it should sound. The record

told me what it wanted to be and I let it."

With "The Hurting Kind," White wanted to explore a country music subgenre known as "Countryopolitan," which developed in the 1960s with a smoother, sophisticated sound that included string sections, background vocals and smooth tempos. It was closer to pop music than it was of "honky tonk" and "outlaw country."

It was made popular by producers like Chet Atkins and Billy Sherrill, a Phil Campbell native who along with the late Rick Hall and Tom Stafford, formed Florence Alabama Music Enterprises, before



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leaving the Shoals for Nashville. Hall continued on his own and founded FAME Recording Studios in Muscle Shoals.

White recalls his dad listening to some of those early Countrypolitan artists like Atkins, Jim Reeves, Patsy Cline, Eddie Arnold, Charlie Rich and others.

"For the first time I sat down and said, 'what do you sound like,' " White said.

songwriters like Whisperin' Bill Anderson, Wayland Holyfield, Bobby Braddock and Whitey Shafer, who died in January,

To his surprise, they all said "let's write a song."

White admitted he also wanted to "sit at their knee" and listen to their stories, but also in a way hoped they would give him the thumbs up and tell him he's on the right track. Roughly half the tracks ended up being



After not listening to much music for several years, because it's his job to make music, he began listening to some of these Countrypolitan artists and began planning the album he'd been looking for but couldn't find.

Once he'd written "Heart Like a Kite" and "My Dreams Have All Come True," he reached out to his then publisher, BMG, for phone numbers of Countrypolitan

collaborations.

The album was recorded at Sun Drop Studio, White's new home recording studio located in Florence's historic district, and at FAME.

Many of the musicians are part of the Single Lock Records family, including co-producer Ben Tanner, pedal steel guitarist Spencer Collum of Steelism, and drummer Reed Watson. There are



also contributions from drummer Jon Radford, guitarist Pat Bergeson, bassists David Hood and Jon Estes, Todd Beane on pedal steel guitar, and Lillie Mae on fiddle. Country artist Lee Ann Womack, Erin Rae and The Secret Sisters appear as guest vocalists.

Since he's co-owner of Single Lock Records, White said he didn't have a drop dead due date for the record, but once he began working on it, the excitement kept him keenly focused on the project.

Plus, his years of working nine to five as a songwriter on Nashville's Music Row taught him how to summon his muse when necessary.

"I can tell when there's songs building up in the back of my head and I need to block some time," he said. "I need to get this stuff percolating onto the page."

Oddly enough, "The Hurting Kind" starts off with the album's most up-tempo song, "The Good Old Days."

"It's really me wondering, what era of America are people wanting to get back to," White said of the track. "I'm having a hard time thinking of one we haven't progressed from, or shouldn't progress from."

It's not a political song, White said, but it is a commentary about how people long for more "innocent times" and the mythical "good old days."

"We're living in a day and age where everybody is tense and stressed out and on edge," he said. "Creative types can't help to be influenced like that, at least emotionally. At some point, things have to be said. I have no urge to go back to any era in America, to say it was a better one."

After the opening track, the album progresses into White's take on Countrypolitan with tracks like "You Lost Me," "I Wish I Could Write You A Song," and the title track, "The Hurting Kind."

"The Hurting Kind" is White's third solo record and his second following the two releases by The Civil Wars, his former collaboration with Joy Williams.

White said he rides a fine line between providing fans with music they've grown used to hearing from him and exploring new territory as an artist. At some point he'd like to have the freedom of a Neil Young, who in the 1980s recorded an electronic album, "Trans," then a rockabilly album, "Everybody's Rockin'," and a country album, "Old Ways" in succession.

"I definitely don't follow a formula to make people happy," White said. "I create whatever my brain wants to that day," he said. "I've got to feel that's what Neil is doing, too. I want that kind of freedom, too, but I have to cultivate that base. I'm in the early stages of that. So far, so good."



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A full-page photograph of Cedric Burnside. He is a Black man with a short beard and mustache, wearing a light-colored jacket over a grey t-shirt and dark pants. He is sitting on the ground, leaning back on his hands, with a black suitcase next to him. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# Cedric Burnside

## *sticks to basics of the blues*

Story by Russ Corey

**Every now and then, a little hip-hop influence might slip into a Cedric Burnside song, but for the most part, he sticks to the basics of the blues, the way he learned it from his late grandfather, blues legend R.L. Burnside.**

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Every now and then, a little hip-hop influence might slip into a Cedric Burnside song, but for the most part, he sticks to the basics of the blues, the way he learned it from his late grandfather, blues legend R.L. Burnside.

Burnside, 40, released his breakthrough album "Benton County Relic" on Sept. 14, 2018, on Florence-based Single Lock Records. That album earned Burnside a Grammy nomination in the category "Best Traditional Blues Album." It was his second Grammy nomination.

Burnside has been involved in the music business since he was a child, and grew up around an assortment of hill country blues artists in and around the Holly Springs area of north Mississippi.

From age 5 until about 19, Burnside was raised by his grandfather, affectionately known as "Big Daddy." He went on his first tour with R.L. Burnside at age 13.

"We drove up to Toronto, Canada, to play in a couple of blues festivals and I've been doing it ever since," he said. While much of his musical upbringing involved the blues, Burnside said he also enjoys mainstream artists like J. Cole, Whitney Houston, Funkadelic and he "loves Stevie Wonder."

"He taught me a lot about music, about life," Burnside said of his grandfather. "I wouldn't trade it for the world. One of the main things he told me was to treat people like you'd like to be treated. He taught me a lot about the road."

While he tries to stick more to traditional blues music, you might hear a song that has a faster tempo or a hip-hop beat. Burnside said he learned drums before he picked up a guitar, following in the footsteps of his father, Calvin Johnson, who played drums



for R.L. Burnside.

When his father left, Cedric became the drummer in his grandfather's touring band. According to *Billboard* magazine, Cedric Burnside has won five consecutive Blues Music Awards for Best Instrumentalist as a drummer.

"Playing with Big Daddy opened the door for me playing drums," Burnside said. "It was about 13 to 14 years ago when I picked up the guitar to pick on it and write songs." Burnside said he's only been playing guitar professionally for seven or eight years.

Growing up in Holly Springs, a hotbed for Mississippi Hill Country Blues, Burnside learned from artists like T Model Ford, Paul "Wine" Jones, Robert Cage, Robert Belfour, Otha Turner, Jessie Mae Hemphill and others, including contemporaries Luther and Cody Dickinson of the North Mississippi All Stars.

"I spend a lot of time around those cats," Burnside said. "They always have a story for you how they came up."

Fat Possum Records executives found Burnside playing drums with his Big Daddy at Junior Kimbrough's juke joint and suggested they go on the road together.

Burnside said his music reflects how he lives his life, the good times and bad times he, his family or friends have faced, and typical blues material.

"It might be a death in the family, it might be my car is broke down on the side of a road, waiting for someone to pick me up," he said. "I just try to stay true to everyday life, without the politics side."

Burnside's new album has been getting rave reviews from publications such as "Billboard," "Paste" and "Mojo" magazines, the Bitter Southern



website and others. While he's released six or seven of his own albums, Burnside has appeared on countless others as an accompanying musician. He said this is the first album released by a record label with the ability to adequately publicize the record.

"Joining with Single Lock is helping me push it," Burnside said.

Burnside said it makes him feel good seeing younger artists performing blues music. While the popularity of the blues might have died down a little bit, Burnside said it's coming back stronger than ever.

"It got fairly rocky for a while, but I think people are going back to the blues," he said. "It makes me want to keep doing what I'm doing, paving the road for them like Big Daddy did for me."



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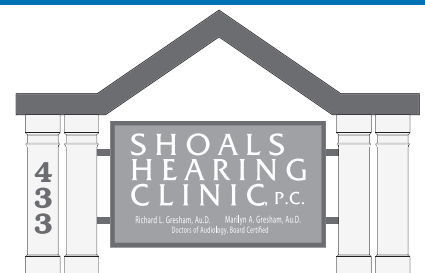


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# The Allman Betts Band

## record debut album at iconic Muscle Shoals Sound Studios



Guitarists Devon Allman, Barry Oakley Jr. and Duane Betts pose for a photo at Muscle Shoals Sound Studios where they are recording an album.

MUSIC

Story by Russ Corey  
Photography by Matt McKean

Devon Allman said he certainly felt a vibe while recording tracks for his Allman Betts Band album in the iconic Muscle Shoals Sound Studios, where his late uncle Duane laid down tracks for the likes of Boz Skaggs, Ronnie

Hawkins, Lulu and John Hammond.

The band wrapped up a week-long session at the studio late last year and anticipates releasing the album in the spring.

In addition to Allman, son of the late Allman Brothers Band co-

founder, Gregg Allman, the band includes Duane Betts, son of ABB founding guitarist Dickey Betts, and Berry Oakley Jr., son of the late ABB founding bassist, Berry Oakley.

While in the Shoals for the recording session,



Allman said the band had plans to hit the road in March and "take a lap around the planet" for a tour that will take about 12-14 months.

"It will be an Allman, a Betts and an Oakley, just like the original band," Oakley said. "It's going to be fun. I'm looking forward to it."

He said the history and legacy of Muscle Shoals Sound can't be beat, and it made perfect sense for the band to record their debut album in the Shoals.

"I really wanted our first time making a record together to be as special as possible to kind of build the story," Allman said during an interview in the studio's basement. "There's a lot of factors that go into it, not just the studio. We have an exceptional producer, Matt Ross-Spang. We're doing it fully analogue to 2-inch tape. No digital in the process whatsoever."

Chuck Leavell, the touring keyboardist for The Rolling Stones and a former member of the Allman Brothers Band, also makes an appearance on the album.

"These are the kind of things that build the story of the record," Allman said. "And this is certainly a historic place and I've wanted to record here forever. When I told Duane about it, he was like, yes, it makes perfect sense. It's full circle for our families."

Betts, who spent part of the year on tour with Allman, said recording at Muscle Shoals Sound is like a dream come true.

"You can get into a comfortable place in a recording process, but this is like how I would envision the perfect environment," Betts said.

He pointed at the basement walls, which

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Duane Betts plays a late 1940s Martin guitar given to his father Dickey by Country music singer Gary Stewart as he waits to continue recording an album with Duane Allman's son Devon at Muscle Shoals Sound Studios.

are plastered with the jackets of albums recorded in the studio.

"This has been a blessing," Oakley said. "In my 30 years in the studio, this has been the smoothest, easiest session making a record, but still really professional."

Allman said he's known about the vibe and "mojo" surrounding the studio.

"Then you come in here and you get to work and, it's not really when you're working because you can't be thinking about that," he said. "We'll take breaks and I'll look around and wow, we're here, we're adding to it."

Allman said the album has a vibe similar to Derek & the Dominos' "Layla," not so much in the songs, but the feeling.

"There's some soul, there's some classic rock, there's some country, smoky bluesy, rally and

an amalgam of all the beloved Americana that we've grown up on," he said. "You don't want to give it all away. It will be out in the world soon enough."

The songs were written by Allman and Betts and Betts' songwriting partner Stoll Vaughan, a Kentucky native whose two albums were in the Top 10 of the Americana charts.

Betts said he and Vaughan wrote songs for his last EP and Allman liked some of the material.

"When we started, we thought it would be a good idea to bring him in as a mediator," Betts said. "He's a good guy to bounce stuff off. I've got my voice on this record but I didn't have to write all the songs. We all kind of put in enough to feel really great about our contributions."

Oakley said he has chemistry with Allman and Betts mainly because

they've known each other for so long.

"Me and Duane have been in many bands over the decades, so it's nice now coming together after all these years," Oakley said.

Oakley said during the sessions he played his 1966 Fender bass through Swamper David Hood's bass rig. He also used one of Hood's bass guitars and for one track, he used a 1967 Fender Precision bass his dad and Duane Allman bought for Johnny Sandlin.

Sandlin, who died earlier this year was an engineer on the Allman Brothers Band's live album "At Fillmore East" and "Eat a Peach." He also produced the ABB album "Brothers and Sisters" and a number of later albums.

Oakley said he plans to use a couple of his father's bass guitars on the road, but didn't feel safe having them shipped



in for the recording sessions.

Allman said the band was excited about bringing the new material to their fans.

"The thing that really hit us in the last couple of days is we have all these wonderful songs to play live," Allman said during the interview with the TimesDaily last year. "Duane and I have had a really great fun and successful year touring together."

The Devon Allman Band with Duane Betts have been playing a few Allman Brothers Band classics like "Blue Sky," "Dreams" and "Multicolored Lady," and will likely continue to play maybe three of their dads' songs on tour.

Allman said sometimes it can be difficult to perform his father's songs live.

"There's months that will go by and I just feel honored and then there's a night where I'm heartbroken and I miss my dad," he said. "And that's when it's hard and you suck it up and you do your job."

The artists stressed that while they will be paying tribute to their fathers and the Allman Brothers Band, they will be also be making their own mark.

"You have to strike a balance that is weighted in integrity," Allman said. "I think it really hit us the last couple of days that we're going to have some great moments with our new music that's going to be on the record."

But as Oakley said, there's no escaping who they are.

"We have our voice as well as continuing the legacy," Oakley said. "As much as we try not to, we do sound like our fathers."

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MUSIC

# Museum holds memories of owner's musical journey

PEANUTT MONTGOMERY



Singer/song writer Peanutt Montgomery talks about banners from the Grand Ole Opry that he has on display inside his Music Museum in downtown Sheffield.

MUSIC



Story by Russ Corey  
Photography by Matt McKean

**The first thing you'll notice after entering Peanutt Montgomery's Music Museum is a framed portrait of an artist's rendering of Jesus Christ on the right side of the wall.**

The songwriter, who has spent nearly 60 years in the music business, and his wife, Charlene, are devout Christians.

The portrait sets the tone for a visit to a museum that is more like entering someone's home.

There are no interactive displays, but if you pay the \$8 admission, you'll get to hear explanations and stories about items that more than likely came from Montgomery's personal collection of music memorabilia.

There's an old framed black-and-white photo of two men playing horseshoes. Montgomery points at it and says, "That's me and Lefty Frizell playing horseshoes on Dallas Frazier's farm."

Frazier is a friend and noted Nashville, Tennessee, songwriter.

The museum is on Raleigh Avenue in Sheffield. Inside, there are display cases of 45 RPM records, many of which Montgomery holds writer or co-writer credits. Many of them are cuts for the legendary late country music artist George Jones.

Montgomery wrote or co-wrote 38 songs for Jones. Montgomery and his wife had a personal relationship with Jones for 22 years.

In addition to 45 and 33 RPM records, there are posters from Jones concerts, including one featuring Peanutt Montgomery. You'll also see memorabilia for Jones and Tammy Wynette.

There is a black, short-sleeved "safari coat" that Jones wore on the cover of "The President and the First Lady," an album he made with Wynette. There is also a blue dress that Wynette wore during a concert.

Montgomery has a base station citizens band radio that Jones once had in his Shoals homes on



One of Peanutt's songs is on Percy Sledge's "When A Man Loves A Woman" album that is on display inside his Music Museum.

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Wright Drive in the Twin Brooks subdivision. He also has a 1955 Shure microphone Jones once used.

Charlene Montgomery points to a poster on the wall of Jones and Wynette that was signed with a personal message, "To Peanutt and Charlene, my friends forever."

"That means a lot to me," she said.

There is also a small ceramic figurine of two old men sitting on a park bench. Peanutt Montgomery said Jones bought it in an airport and later gave it to him.

"He said, Peanutt, this will be you and me some day," Montgomery said.

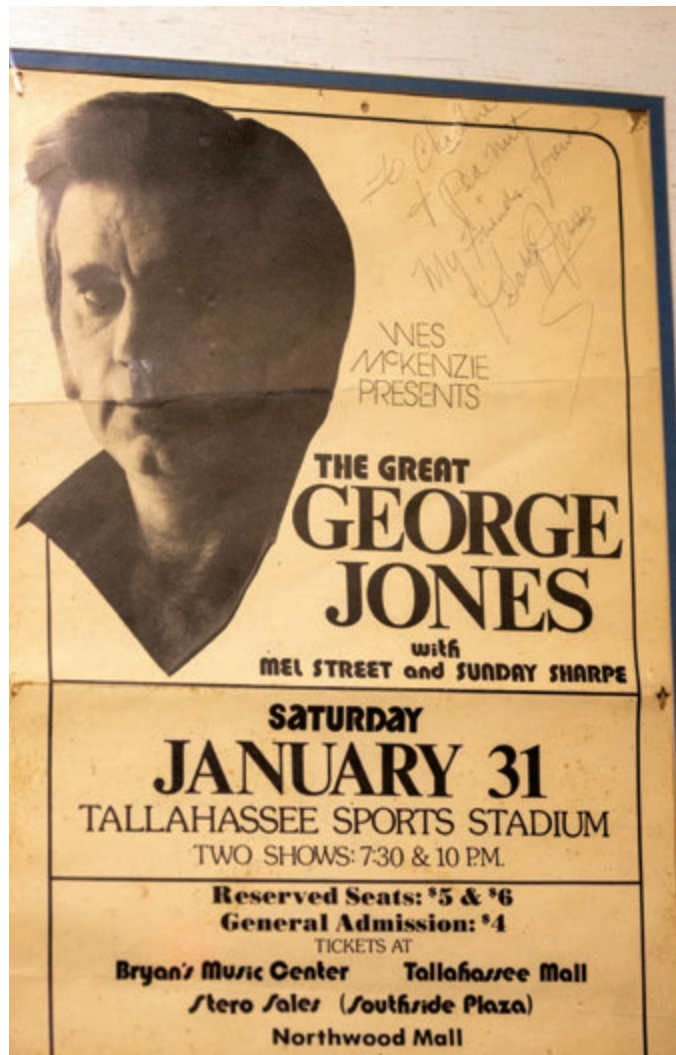
Jones died April 26, 2013.

There is an entire

section of the room dedicated to Jones, and another to Elvis Presley. There is also space dedicated to some of Montgomery's musical endeavors, including a photo of the "Owl Band," a group of musicians who played on WOWL Radio in the early 1960s.

There's some FAME Recording Studio memorabilia featuring its late founder, Rick Hall, and artists who recorded there. Montgomery was a member of Hall's first rhythm section and played guitar on Hall's first big hit, "You Better Move On" by Arthur Alexander.

There is also memorabilia from Montgomery's sister, Melba, who was a successful country singer.



Items from George Jones are on display in Peanutt's Music Museum.



The room has a stage, and don't be surprised if Montgomery performs a few songs during tours.

There are also non-music related items, such as Montgomery's vast diecast car collection and presidential pocket knife collection.

Montgomery is in the process of building a small recording studio that will be adjacent to the museum.

"I'm building a digital and analog studio," he said.

Charlene Montgomery said they will continue to add items to the museum.

"What I like about this museum, more than anything: I cleaned my home out," she said.

For information, call the museum at 256-248-4695.



George Jones' radio that Peanut has on display inside his Music Museum.

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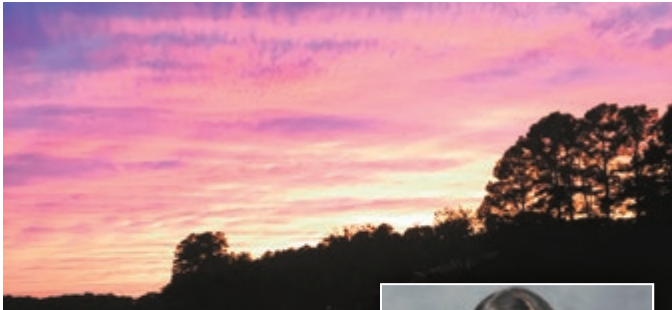
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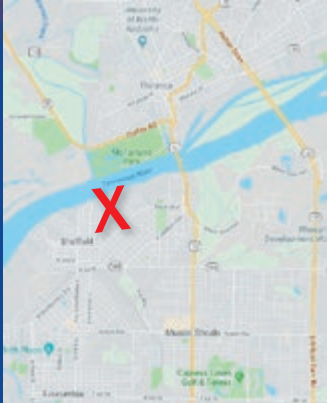
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# HIP HOP

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Hip-hop artists Codie G and Geoffrey G Mane Robinson take questions and speak during a panel discussion.

A panel of hip-hop artists take questions from M. Fletcher Brown of Kix 96 radio and speak during a panel discussion at the Alabama Music Hall of Fame in Tusculmbia.

Story by Russ Corey  
Photography by Jim Hannon

Kenny Thomas was possibly the most excited hip hop artist at the Alabama Music Hall of Fame in August last year as the museum unveiled its long-awaited showcase focusing on a musical genre and cultural movement that had been overlooked.

The Tuscaloosa-based rapper known as Alabama Kenny

was one of several artists from places like Huntsville, Birmingham, Montgomery and Shorter to attend the unveiling.

"I want this to be a new beginning," Thomas said. "I came here to

celebrate."

The showcase, containing a variety of memorabilia, photos, CDs, magazine articles and bios of Alabama hip hop pioneers, was put together by museum

Curator John Moseley and rapper/producers Codie Gopher, of Huntsville, known as Codie G, and Geoffrey Robinson, of Florence, who is known in hip hop circles as GMANE.

"This has been building for a long, long, long time," Thomas said. "I know what all these guys have been through."

Gopher and Robinson



talked about how they made themselves known in hip hop, and several of the artists they asked to join them echoed what they said about not having a blueprint to follow. So they created their own.

"We had to learn all of this on our own," Robinson said.

He hooked up with local DJ turned rap producer Ron Harrison, aka Chubb Fresh, and learned how to produce music. Robinson became a member of Slave Kamp, one of the first rap groups to appear in the Shoals in the early 1990s.

Gopher said he was born into hip hop, which he called a culture as much as it is a musical genre.

In addition to having nobody to seek out for advice, the artists said in Alabama, hip hop was forced underground "by the powers that be, whether they be black or white."

And there was nobody to champion the music.

Another obstacle they faced was learning the business end of hip hop, like knowing how to read a contract, how to promote their music, copywriting, music publishing, graphics and photography.

Since they're now the go-to guys, they offered advice for up and coming hip hop artists.

"Make sure this is what you want to do," Robinson said. "It's hard work."

He said the obstacles he faced coming up helped keep him grounded and made him work harder.

Gopher offered some hard, real-life advice.

"Be able to pay your bills," he said. "The utility department don't care about your CD."

"Everybody thinks this is easy," Gopher

said. "You've still got to be able to read your contract so you don't have to sell your hip hop soul."

Gopher said he's not about the hip hop mystique that's often portrayed on television. He's more about what's important to him, like his mom and his kids.

"I'm in it for the education," Gopher said, and has worked with interns from the University of North Alabama.

Another Slave Kamp member, Sean Alexander, who is known as Whyze Up, said his mother didn't discourage him from getting into hip hop. She advised him to learn the music business, which he did through music industry courses at UNA.

Tusculumbia Mayor Kerry Underwood and Councilman William Foster both made an appearance at the unveiling.

"We're recognizing this genre and it's long overdue," Underwood said. "I feel like we're making a new turn."

The exhibit, which Moseley, Robinson and Gopher said is not complete, has been in the making for about four years.

"This is something that is going to be added to," Moseley said.

Robinson said there are still a lot of artists the Alabama Music Hall of Fame museum wants to include in the showcase, which is near exhibits honoring guitarist Travis Wammack and the Allman Brothers band.

"There's no need to be afraid of hip hop," Thomas said. "It's just music. Don't be afraid of the music or the culture. Embrace us."

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# Muscle Shoals Sound Studio launches podcast series

Terrell Benton  
looks over script  
for podcast.



Story by Russ Corey  
Photography by Patrick Hood

Muscle Shoals Sound Studio's first major recording session in 1969 was the topic of the iconic recording studio's first podcast, launched in April, the same day Cher's "3614 Jackson Highway" session concluded.

Debbie Wilson, the studio's executive director, said the subject of the first podcast was appropriate since "3614 Jackson Highway," which features the musicians and producers standing in front of the building, is being released by Run Out Groove Records to commemorate the album's 50th anniversary.

The album featured the studio's rhythm section — Barry Beckett on keyboards, Roger Hawkins on drums, David Hood on bass and Jimmy Johnson on guitar. Eddie Hinton played lead guitar and Jeannie Greene, Donna Jean Thatcher, Mary Holladay and Sue Pilkington provided backing vocals.

"That's the thing that got us started," Wilson said back in April. "The Cher sessions will be literally 50 years old on (April) 19th. They finished on the 21st."

A podcast is a series of audio or video files about a topic that can be downloaded and listened to, or subscribed to through various services like iTunes. The term was created from the iPod media player and the word "broadcast."

Podcasts can be listened to on various music file players or cellphones.

Wilson said the podcast idea came from studio Manager Anna Hyde, First Impressions Coordinator Mallory Kirk and tour guide Terrell



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Benton, who will record the podcast. The series is being called "The Vibe of Muscle Shoals Sound."

"It's really good exposure," Wilson said of the studio entering the podcasting world. "We have so many stories to tell. It's another marketing tool to get it out there. It will take marketing to the next level."

Hyde said each edition of the podcast will last 20 minutes. Hyde said research indicates listeners lose interest after about 20 minutes.

During staff discussions, Hyde said Benton asked who would actually speak on the podcast. Hyde said she responded, "You."

"I volunteered him to do that," Hyde said. "His voice tells a story. That's what you want a podcast to do, and it's easy to understand his voice."

Benton said he's getting some help from Nina Jackson, the production manager at Big River Broadcasting, who will serve as his de facto producer.

Hyde said the podcasts will be quarterly at first, but could expand in frequency in the future.

"As it grows, we may amp that up," Hyde said. "We hope at some point to do video recording at the same time on a YouTube channel so people can watch."

Benton already has numerous ideas for future podcasts, including a history of some of the more recognizable albums recorded in the studio, including Boz Scaggs' second album.

"David told me some great stories of that recording," he said.

He'd also like to take a look at the Leon Russell sessions where producer Denny Cordell called the rhythm section the



"Swampers," a name that stuck with them for decades.

Producer Jerry Wexler could be the subject of a future podcast, as could the Swampers themselves and the unsung guitarist and songwriter Eddie Hinton.

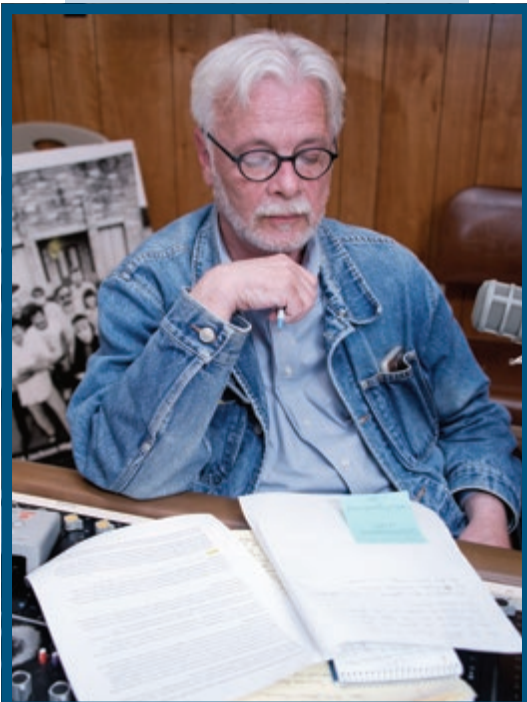
"It's storytelling," Benton said.

The first episode has already received sponsorship from Florence-Lauderdale Tourism and NuWay Vinyl in Muscle Shoals. The podcasts will be promoted through the studio's website and Facebook page.



"More than anything, it's a good marketing tool and good exposure for the sponsors," Wilson said. "We want to market it internationally, too."

Hyde said the podcasts must be approved by whoever is offering them before they are made public, at least for the first few releases.

Muscle Shoals Sound Studio was only open for 10 years at 3614 Jackson Highway before moving to a building on Alabama Avenue.



Terrell Benton scans notes for Muscle Shoals Sound Podcast.



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Once finished, there will be 12 new camping sites for recreational vehicles, an additional picnic pavilion, an additional bathhouse, and restroom facilities. All of the facility will be handicapped-accessible. There also are boat ramps at the campground that provide easy access to the water for campers and fishing enthusiasts.



## ■ Brush Creek Park

Lauderdale 14, near Waterloo.

Open from mid-March through late October. No fee to camp. Thirty-day maximum stay. 256-760-5878 or 256-760-5750

Brush Creek Park in Lauderdale County has seen some improvements this year with new camping sites for RVs and is handicapped-accessible.

## Other Parks

### ■ Colbert Alloys Park and Campground

180 Alloys Park Lane, Muscle Shoals

Located on Wilson Lake, has RV, tent and primitive camping; electricity; water; sewage and dump station; bathhouse; and boat ramp. The park is open year round. 256-383-0783

### ■ Colbert Rose Trail

9395 Riverton Rose Trail, Cherokee

Located on Pickwick Lake, the grounds include tent and primitive camping, electricity, water, dump station, piers, pavilion, bathrooms, showers and seasonal boat ramps. Open all year. 256-360-2764

### ■ Heritage Acres RV Park

1770 Neil Morris Road, off U.S. 72, Tuscumbia

The park offers RV campsites with full hookups, coin laundry, bath house, free cable television, free WiFi. Daily, weekly and monthly rates are available, and big rigs and pets are welcome. 256-383-7368; heritageacresrvpark.com.

### ■ Rose Trail RV Park and General Store

9270 Riverton Rose Trail, Cherokee

Located across from Colbert Boat Ramp on Bear Creek on the Tennessee River, it can accommodate 14 large RVs with full hookups with WiFi hot spot, hunting and fishing available. The Wildlife Management Area has a check-in station. A deli is available with food to order and carries general merchandise. Locked boat storage is available. 256-360-2393.

### ■ Tuscumbia RV Park

18260 U.S. 72, Tuscumbia

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A gravel path leads down to the Tennessee River at Wheeler Campground near Wheeler Dam which is now open

#### ■ Wilson Dam Rock Pile Campground

663 Rock Pile Road, Muscle Shoals

A self-service campground opens mid-March through mid-November with 23 campsites. Rest rooms with heated showers and flush toilets, picnic tables and grills, boat ramps above and below the dam, lake and river fishing, hiking trail (10 miles), walking trail, nature area, wildlife viewing area, bird watching and bicycling. 800-882-5263; [tva.gov/river/recreation/camping.htm#wilson](http://tva.gov/river/recreation/camping.htm#wilson).

#### ■ McFarland Park

Alabama 20, Florence

The park has 60 campsites open year round with electrical and water connections. It also has rest rooms, bathhouse and laundry facilities. The park is conducive to tent camping. 256-740-8817.

#### ■ Joe Wheeler State Park

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#### ■ Wheeler Reservation Campground

Alabama 101, east end of Wheeler Dam.

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# the RED CLAY table

## the RED CLAY table

Chef Ryan Evans and Chef Justin Murrah at the Red Clay table restaurant in downtown Sheffield have the reputation of preparing food that not only is pleasing to the palate, but to the eye as well.







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Story by Cecilia Brumley  
Photography by Heather Sherrill of Create Portraiture

Rodney and Laquita Logan have worked hard at revitalizing Sheffield's downtown district and most recently added The Red Clay Table and Red Clay Epicurean Catering to their list. This husband and wife team have extended the hours of operation, added new menu items and have a staff that is eager to serve you. Executive Chefs Ryan Evans and Justin Murrah are cooking up new menu items that are pleasing to the palate and the eye. Front House Manager Beth Phillips and her staff are looking forward to expanding hours of service to accommodate dinner and weekend guests and Gracie Alverson, Catering Coordinator for Red Clay Epicurean and Tanya Jackson, Event Planner are ready to plan your next event.

"Red Clay" is a reference to the region and also reflects that Chef Evans and Chef Murrah keep the ingredients to their dishes as local as possible. They use

locally-grown vegetables, and the beef once grazed the pastures of FAME Ranch. The soaps in the restrooms are made by a woman who has a lavender farm across the state line in Tennessee. Baskets on the tables are hand woven from dried kudzu vines, which are plentiful around here.

Menu selections are inviting even before you take the first bite. How about sandwiches with names that include Muscle Shoals (a seared slice of meatloaf with paprika mayo, fresh lettuce, pickled red onion horseradish brown mustard and muenster cheese), and of course Sheffield (black pepper and brown sugar on house cured bacon, fresh tomato, roasted tomato aoli, fresh lettuce, bacon jam and gouda cheese). There are others that are equally delicious.

There are soups, sides, salads, and "small bites and shareables," desserts that include a delicious bread pudding and a menu for the "youngsters."







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# time to Eat

The Shoals has plenty of variety when it comes to the dining experience. Following is just a sample of local restaurants that offer great menus.

## FAMILY

### ALABAMA CHANIN, FACTORY AND CAFÉ

Where: 462 Lane Drive, Florence; 256-760-1090; alabamachanin.com/the factory

Hours: Weekday lunch, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday; Saturday brunch, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Factory hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

Think fresh – as in organically grown: salads, vegetable of the day, sandwiches, quiche, daily plate, beer and wine, and other yummy items that change regularly. It's all served on the fringe of where renowned designer Alabama Chanin creates and produces her signature fashions. When you're satiated from the lovely food, take advantage of the opportunity to tour The Factory studio.

### BIG BAD BREAKFAST

Where: 315 N. Court St., Florence; 256-415-8545; bigbadbreakfast.com/locations/florence-alabama

Hours: 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. seven day a week

The aprons were designed by renowned fashion icon Alabama Chanin, the sounds of Shoals-related music mingle with conversation and the tink of cutlery against plate, and there are so many breakfast combinations on the menu, you'll just camp out there – if they'd allow you. But if breakfast past 9 a.m. is not your thing, there are salads, sandwiches and wraps, too. Ingredients are locally sourced whenever possible and the chef overseeing Florence's newest eatery is passionate about laying a great table.

### BOX CAR CAFÉ

Where: 220 N. Nashville Ave., Sheffield; 256-381-7437  
Hours: 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Monday through Friday

Good variety on its breakfast menu. A recent sample of lunch, which is served beginning at 10 a.m., was meatloaf, salmon, taco salad, chicken and dressing, vegetables, salad and bread. Desserts served, too.

### CITY HARDWARE

Where: 105 N. Court St., Florence; 256-275-3666; cityhardwareflorence.com

Hours: Daily, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

With its old town ambiance and flavorful menu, City Hardware offers diners many menu choices from land and sea, billing itself as "American Cuisine with a Southern Accent."

### LEGENDS STEAKHOUSE

Where: 201 N. Seminary St. Florence; 256-766-5072 legendssteakhouse.com

Hours: Sunday-Thursday,

11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

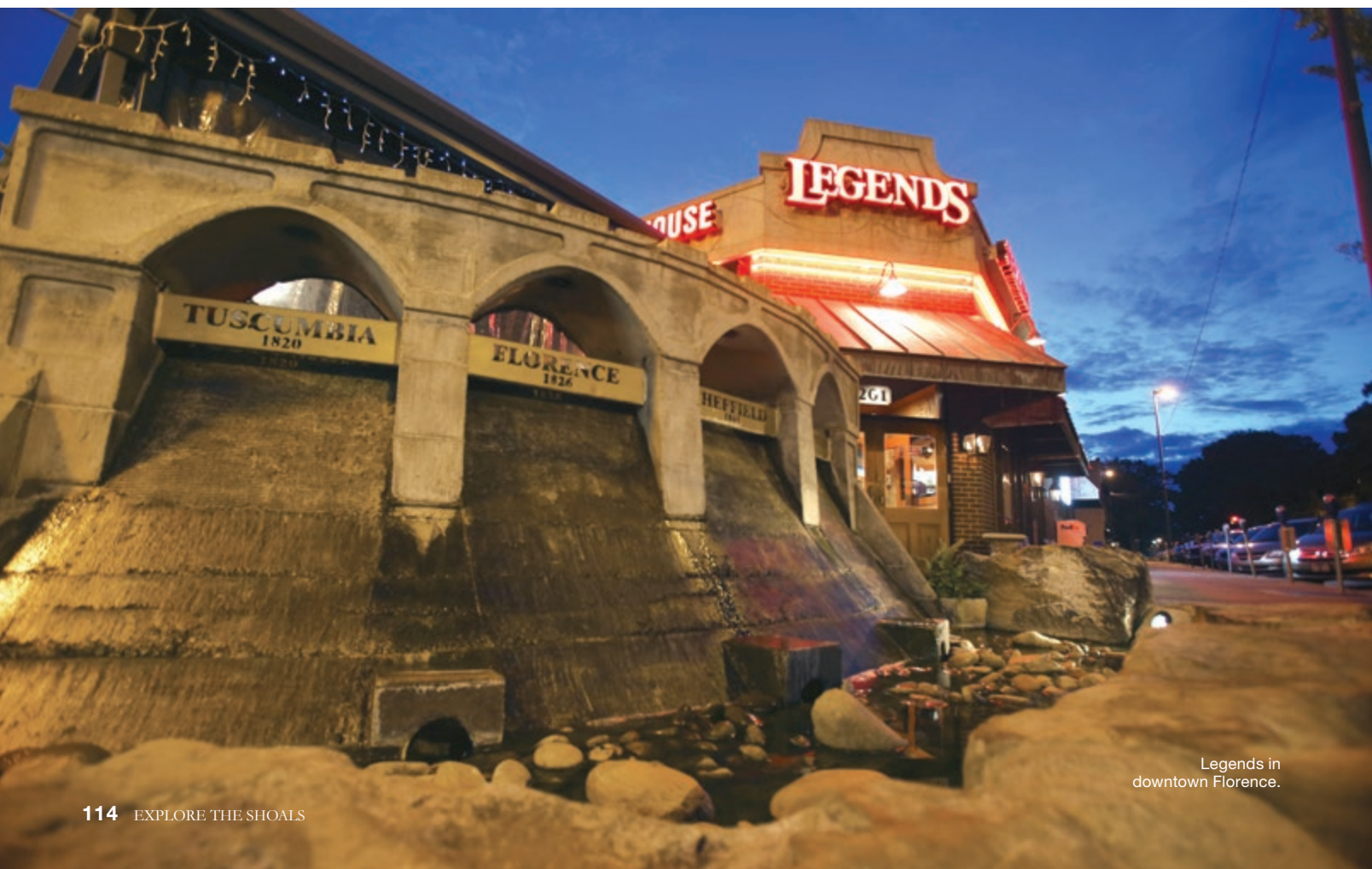
This steak house serves up far more than a juicy slice of beef. The menu items are numerous, the environment charming and the décor tells a story. There is a covered patio seating about 50 people so guests can enjoy outdoor dining in the warmer months.

### ODETTE

Where: 120 N. Court Street, Florence; 256-349-5219; odettealabama.com

Hours: Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Odette bills itself as serving "elevated American fare with Southern and international influences." Menu items feature locally- and sustainable-sourced ingredients. The atmosphere is contemporary and relaxed. It's a local favorite



Legends in downtown Florence.



## GARDEN GATE

Where: 701 Avalon Ave. Muscle Shoals; 256-383-6905; and a Florence location at 1917 Florence Blvd.; 256-349-2569

Hours: Monday-Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Garden Gate serves home cooking in generous helpings that include fare like fried chicken, beef tips and rice, slow cooked pork roast, chicken and dumplings and home-style veggies like grandma used to cook: turnip greens, potatoes and gravy, green beans, corn, fried okra, purple hull peas or white beans.

## CITY RESTAURANT

Where: 108 W. 5th Street, Tuscumbia; 256-383-9809

Hours: 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday

Come early and enjoy a full breakfast or drop by for a hearty meat-and-three lunch. Burgers and sandwiches are also available.

## CLAUNCH CAFÉ

Where: 400 S. Main St. Tuscumbia; 256-386-0222; Facebook page

Hours: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday through Thursday

Claunch Café specializes in down home Southern

cooking. Diners can sit inside the glassed in porch and look out at the beauty of Spring Park. In the summer months, the glass is removed and only the screens remain. The chicken salad plate is a must-try – it's Claunch's signature dish.

## THE PIE FACTORY

Where: 106 N. Court St., Florence, 256-275-3248; 3312 W. Woodward Ave., Muscle Shoals, 256-314-2622; pizzapiefactory.com

Hours: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday

How about a handmade-when-you-order, fresh ingredients 16-inch or 14-inch pizza with an array of topping options? The dough is made in-house. Or maybe you're in the mood for one of the half dozen calzone offerings on the menu. Also offered are wings, side and dinner salads. But you've got to try the fresh, handmade pizzas – there are more than 20 gourmet pizza creations to choose from. Also offered are craft and small-batch beers in bottles and on tap – many made right here in Alabama.



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## RATTLESNAKE SALOON

Where: 1292 Mount Mills Road, Tuscumbia; 256-370-7220; Reservations must be booked before 4:45 p.m. by calling 256-370-7218; rattlesnakesaloon.net

Hours: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Thursday through Saturday (Feb.-Nov.); 11 .m. to 3 p.m., Sunday (April-Sept.)

You've got to see this restaurant. There's a reason it bills itself as "the watering hole under the rock." This is a very popular restaurant. See the website for reservation rules.

## RAY'S AT THE BANK

Where: 1411 Huntsville Road, Florence; 256-275-7716; Facebook page

Hours: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday

Good regional fare in this new restaurant in east Florence. The building has been renovated to expose brick walls that adds warmth and charm to the dining experience, which features sandwiches (smoked gouda pimiento cheese sounds good), slow smokes pork brisket, ribs and chicken, and soups and salads.

## RHODA P'S

Where: 312 N. Montgomery Ave., Sheffield; 256-978-5179; rhodascatering.com

Hours: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday through Friday; 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday

Rhoda P's has been a favorite among locals and visitors for decades. How about succulent fried pork chops, corn casserole, pinto bean and fried okra. That's the kind of mouthwatering menu items found here. Open buffet.

## SEASON'S

Where: 1420 Huntsville Road, Florence; 256-349-5691; seasonsfood1420.com

Hours: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday; 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday; 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Friday; 6:30-11 a.m. Saturday

This newest eatery features sandwiches and salads and is located in a renovated historical building in east Florence.

## STANFIELD'S RIVER BOTTOM GRILLE

Where: Florence Harbor; 256-768-1721; riverbottomgrille.com

Hours: 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday-Saturday

It's the only floating restaurant in the Shoals. The view of Florence Harbor surrounds you in this casual

dining spot. When the weather permits, take a table on the deck and drink in the ambiance of the Tennessee River lifestyle. The menu is long and varied. The Stanfield's Steamer Bucket of seafood is a favorite.

## SWEET BASIL CAFÉ

Where: 1627 Darby Drive, Florence; 256-764-5991; Facebook

Hours: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday

Choose from an assortment of sandwiches or opt for the lunch plate special. Or order a "super foods salad" featuring kale, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and chicory, carrots, dried cranberries and all kinds of yummy ingredients with a hone-lime dressing. The eatery is also a market, so take advantage of its leisurely atmosphere and browse.

## SWAMPERS BAR AND GRILL

Where: One Hightower Place, inside Marriott Shoals Hotel and Spa; 256-246-3600

Hours: 6:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday and Sunday

This Florence eatery features casual dining in an elegant setting with a comfortable lounge and outdoor patio for diners to enjoy. Swampers serves breakfast, lunch and dinner featuring classic American fare. The interior honors Alabama's rich cultural heritage.

## BAR AND GRILL

### 2ND & 13 SPORTS BAR & GRILLE

Where: 213 N. Montgomery Ave., Sheffield; 256-978-2414

Hours: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday; noon to 10 p.m. Sunday

Casual dining with menu items that include salads, sliders, burgers, wings, steak, pork, and lots of sides and desserts.

## ON THE ROCKS

Where: 110 N. Court St., Florence; 256-760-2212; florenceontherocks.com

Hours: 4 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Full menu for lunch and dinner includes pub-like menu items like hot wings, nachos, burgers and sandwiches, grilled mahi mahi, and steak. It is a favorite spot for live music and for dining and late socializing in the heart of historic downtown Florence.



## FLOBAMA

Where: 311 N. Court St., Florence; 256-764-2225; Facebook page

Hours: 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. Monday through Saturday  
Another of downtown Florence's dining and late socializing venues, FloBama's menu features hickory smoked beef and pork as well as chicken, salads, wraps. There's Tuesday karaoke, open mic, and live music.

## FINE DINING/ STEAKS/ SEAFOOD

### 360 GRILLE

Where: 800 Cox Creek Pkwy S., Florence; 256-246-3600; reservations required

The 360 Grille, located atop the Renaissance Tower at the 4-star Marriott Shoals Hotel and Spa, offers spectacular views of the Tennessee Valley and hails as Alabama's only revolving restaurant.

The menu features regional American cuisine with a commitment to locally grown

produce, sustainable farming practices and seasonality. A five course chef's tasting offers innovative takes on some classics, while the a la carte menu presents refined renditions of Southern favorites. The 360 lounge offers unique cocktails made with fresh-squeezed juices and an award-winning wine selection. The Chef's Table is available by reservation and allows diners to interact with the culinary team as they prepare and customize their meal. Ask about the five course chef's tastings.

### COACH'S STEAKHOUSE

Where: 200 S. Main St., Tuscumbia; 256-383-4555

11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday

This restaurant can be found at the end of the walkway extending from Cold Water Books, overlooking Spring Park. Menu items in addition to steak include appetizers like fried mushrooms and bacon cheese fries, steaks that include filet mignon, sirloin, beef tips and ribeye, as well as sandwiches, salad bar, seafood, chicken and pork, even a few pasta dishes.



Rosies Cantina in downtown Florence.

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## GEORGE'S STEAK PIT

Where: 1206 Jackson Hwy.,  
Sheffield; 256-381-1531;  
georgessteakpit.com

Hours: 4:30-10 p.m.  
Tuesday-Saturday

Known throughout the Shoals, this establishment remains an area classic. Diners enjoy a selection of fine wines to complement their meal of choice. Menu appetizers include Oysters Rockefeller, Fried Calamari and the Greek Tray. Steaks are cooked over a wood-fire grill.

## JACK'S PLACE

Where: 118 W. Mobile  
St., Florence; 256-349-5429;  
jacksplacebistro.com

Hours: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Monday; 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
and 5-9 p.m. Tuesday-  
Thursday; 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
and 5-10 p.m. Friday and  
Saturday; 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Sunday

You've seen Chef Jack White's work. The actor turned food stylist has worked in more than 100 movies and TV shows including "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo," "Saving Grace," and "The Hunger Games" series. For brunch or lunch, you'll find mouth-watering selections that include Eggs Benedict three ways, frittata or quiche of the day, Belgian waffles and French toast, or maybe you would prefer a spinach salad or tarragon chicken salad. "Sandwiches and such" include Panini, wraps, a meatball hoagie or burgers, with the "such" including brisket, panko encrusted pork tenderloin, pasta and flatbreads. The dinner menu includes main courses of hand-cut ribeye and braised pork shank among many dishes that will please all appetites.

## STANFIELD'S STEAK HOUSE

Where: 1700 Lee St.,  
Rogersville; 256-247-3336

Hours: 10:30 a.m. to 9  
p.m. Monday-Thursday, 10:30  
a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and  
Saturday

Steaks, burgers, catfish, chicken and sandwiches are served at this Rogersville eatery. There is a lunch menu available for orders placed before 4 p.m.

## BARBEQUE

### BUNYAN'S BARBECUE

Where: 901 W. College  
St., Florence; 256-766-3522;  
bunyanbarbecue.com

Hours: 10 a.m. to 8  
p.m. Monday-Tuesday and  
Thursday-Saturday; 10 a.m. to  
5 p.m. Wednesday

This is a favorite among locals for pulled barbecue pork sandwiches and hotdogs with Bunyan's famous slaw, hot or mild. Chicken is also on the menu. Order ahead and pack a picnic lunch. Eat in or take out.

## DICK HOWELL'S BBQ

Where: 1350 N. Pine St.  
Florence; 256-767-5830;  
Facebook page

Hours: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
Monday through Thursday;  
10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and  
Saturday; 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Sunday

In addition to a smoked barbecue sandwich, try the rib plate, smoke turkey sandwich or stuffed baked potato with meat. The mouthwatering menu has something for every taste.

## 306 BBQ

Where: 322 N. Court St.,  
Florence; 256-766-5665;  
306bbq.com/Florence

Hours: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
Sunday through Thursday; 11  
a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and  
Saturday

Hickory wood smoked barbecue featuring pork, ribs, chicken, turkey, ham, and plates with a choice of sides. There are salad, potatoes and wings, too.

## RICK LANNING'S BBQ

Where (3 locations in the  
Shoals): 4260 Florence Blvd,  
256-757-0200; 212 Cox Creek  
Pkwy. Florence; 256-766-  
0833; 2501 Woodward Ave.,  
Muscle Shoals, 256-383-2020;  
ricksbbq.com

Hours (same at all three  
Shoals locations): 10:30 a.m.  
to 9 p.m. Monday through  
Thursday; 10:30 a.m. to 10  
p.m. Friday and Saturday

Sandwiches, platters, potatoes and salads can be filled with Rick's smoked chicken, pork or beef.

## ICE CREAM/ SANDWICHES

### AUNT BEA'S BAKERY & BISTRO

Where: 107 E. 6th St.,  
Tuscumbia; 256-320-5053;  
auntbeasbakeryandgourmet.  
com

Hours: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Tuesday through Saturday;  
lunch is offered from 11 a.m.  
to 2 p.m.

This quaint bistro in historic downtown Tuscumbia offers signature sandwiches that include Turkey Bacon Ranch and



Smoky Pimento Cheese as well as tradition sandwiches like grilled cheese, ham and cheese, smoked turkey, American BLT and chicken salad croissant. Salads and soup of the day are offered, too. But don't leave without getting something from the bakery. The endless list has everything from cupcakes, pies, cakes, pastries, to torte, macaroons and cookies.

### THE PALACE ICE CREAM AND SANDWICH SHOP

Where: 100 S. Main St. Tuscumbia; 256-386-8210  
Hours: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Saturday

Former home of the Railroad Hotel in 1833, then the location of Palace Drug Store in 1906, this eatery specializes in milkshakes, ice cream, burgers, sandwiches and triple scoop, tri-flavored banana splits.

### SOUL WINGERY & RECORDS

Where: 1055 Poplar St., Florence; 256-275-7434  
Hours: 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday  
Love wings? Soul, as it's fondly referred to, is tucked

in on a side street and has limited space, but you won't mind at all once you taste their wings. There are 10 flavors on the menu – you'll want to work your way through them all and start over again. Flavors include Alabama White Sauce, Buffalo, Lemon Pepper, Honey BBQ, Garlic & Herb, Cajun Ranch, Honey Mustard, Homestyle, Teriyaki, and Nashville Hot.

### TROWBRIDGE'S

Where: 316 N. Court St., Florence; 256-764-1503  
Hours:

In the heart of historic downtown Florence, this shop features handmade shakes, sundaes, and sandwiches.

### ICE CREAM CORNER

Where: 2520 Mall Road, Florence; 256-718-6080; Facebook page

Hours: 1-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday and Sunday; 1-10:30 p.m. Friday; 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Saturday

Located conveniently behind the AMC movie theater, the Ice Cream Corner opens in March, serving 110 flavors. Yogurt is offer, too.

## MEXICAN

### CASA MEXICANA

Where: 11000 Jackson Hwy., Sheffield; 256-381-5397; 550 Brighton Ave., Muscle Shoals, 256-383-4434; 2801 Mall Drive, Florence; 256-767-2750

Traditional Mexican food with starters of chips and salsa are served upon being seated. There is a wide variety of delicious Mexican fare. Popular dishes include taco salads and fajitas.

### LA HACIENDA MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Where: 153 Cox Creek Parkway, Florence; 256-764-3532

Munch on chips and salsa as you choose a meal from the extensive list of offerings or order a drink from the full bar.

### FIESTA MEXICANA (SEVERAL LOCATIONS)

1550 Florence Blvd., 256-766-0100; 3364 Cloverdale Road, Florence, 256-178-6843; 3721 Florence Blvd., 256-272-8444; 41 Market Square, Rogersville, 256-

247-6180; 517 Avalon Ave. E., Muscle Shoals; 256-389-8282; 4001 N. Jackson Hwy, Sheffield; 256-248-4279

### ROSIE'S MEXICAN CANTINA,

302 N. Court St., downtown Florence; 256-767-5599; rosiesmexicancantina.com

Hours: Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The go-to for Mexican food and a fun atmosphere in historic downtown Florence. Create your own custom combo platter or order from the long and varied menu of traditional fare, or soup, salads and appetizers.

## ASAIN

### ICHIBAN

Where: 1207 Jackson Hwy., Sheffield; 256-389-9888; iloveichiban.com

Hours: 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., Sunday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday

Japanese dishes featuring Sushi, a variety of rolls, soups, salads and appetizers.

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## UMI JAPANESE STEAK HOUSE

Where: 201 N. Cox Creek Pkwy., Florence; 256-718-6868; [umijapanesesteakhouse.com](http://umijapanesesteakhouse.com)

Hours: 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., then 4:30-10 p.m. Monday through Friday; 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Saturday; 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Sunday

Traditional and exotic Japanese cuisine including sushi, sashimi, teriyaki, tempura and hibachi food.

## RICE BOX

Where: 1529 N. Wood Avenue, Florence; 256-767-6752

Hours: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Asian cuisine in a casual setting, specializing in Chinese and Japanese food, the menu items reflect the tastes and traditions of both countries. Long and varied menu.

## YUMM

Where: 117 N. Court St., Florence; 256-349-2074; [yumythaisushiandbeyond.com](http://yumythaisushiandbeyond.com)

Hours: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., then 5-9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., then 5-10 p.m. Friday

and Saturday

Sushi and Thai cuisine and everything beyond – mild or spicy and artistically prepared. Eat indoors or alfresco in historic downtown Florence.

## CAJUN AND CREOLE

### NEW ORLEANS TRANSFER

Where: 1682 S. Wilson Dam Road, Muscle Shoals; 256-386-0656; Facebook page

Hours: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday

Family recipes are served at this authentic Creole restaurant. The setting is simple, casual and laid back, evoking nostalgic images of a classic bayou eatery. A favorite main dish is the Seafood Gumbo and the most popular dessert is a unique version of bread pudding with bourbon sauce.

## CAJUNS

Where: 4301 Jackson Hwy., Sheffield; 256-381-1573

Hours: 3 p.m. to midnight Wednesday-Friday, noon to midnight Saturday

Cajun-flavored food in a relaxed environment, with delicacies such as fried oysters and shrimp, red beans and rice, frog legs, corn and potatoes. Menu also offers regular fare.

## ITALIAN PIZZA SPECIALTY

### RICATONI'S ITALIAN GRILL

Where: 107 N. Court Street, Florence; 256-718-1002

Hours: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday

The historic building has exposed brick walls and diners love the fresh bread and saucer of herbs and oil as a starter. Traditional Italian fare with handmade pizzas baked in a wood fire oven.

## THE PIE FACTORY

Where: 106 N. Court St., Florence; 256-275-3248; and 3312 Woodward Ave., Muscle Shoals; 256-314-2622; [pizzapiefactory.com](http://pizzapiefactory.com)

Hours: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday

They make their own dough in house and you can choose from a variety of savory sauces, cheeses and toppings or choose one of their specialty pizzas and a craft beer brewed in Alabama.

## THE CHICAGO CAFÉ

Where: 106 E. Mobile St., Florence; 256-710-3607; Facebook page

Hours: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. Sunday

Great, quick lunch place in historic downtown Florence serving black angus beef hot dogs, locally sourced organic bratwursts, and flatbread pizza made to order sandwiches.

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## COFFEE HOUSE/BISTRO

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Where: 1206 Woodward Avenue, Muscle Shoals, 256-248-4530;

Hours: 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday

How about a picnic lunch while you're here? Try the grilled triple cheese pimento cheese and bacon, or the roasted chicken salad, or one of salads with a cup of soup or slice of homemade quiche. You can enjoy a Bliss meal there or take it with you knowing it has been prepared fresh onsite. Staying with family or friends and want to contribute to the home meal? Bliss offers a variety of take-home dishes ready to just pop in the oven.

### RIVERTOWN COFFEE COMPANY

Where: 117 N. Seminary St., Florence 765-7128; [rivertowncoffee.co](http://rivertowncoffee.co)

Hours: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday

Muffin or breakfast wrap with a cup of Mule Town Coffee shipped in weekly from Columbia Tennessee are favorites. Also serves lunch that includes their famous Panini and soup of the day.

### THE ROCK 310

Where: 310 N. Montgomery Ave., Sheffield, 256-320-7653; [therock310.com](http://therock310.com)

Hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Saturday

This charming bistro offers gourmet sandwiches and yummy pastries that include scones, muffins, Danish, cinnamon roll and desserts like blueberry white chocolate cheesecake, along with a selection of coffees. The beautiful interior is also houses Christian literature, Bibles and gifts.

### TURBO COFFEE

Where: 310 E. Tennessee St., Florence; 256-483-1501; Facebook page

Hours: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday  
Coffee shop that also serves food and smoothies.

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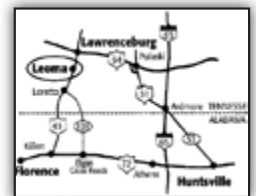
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